

# Disability Now

## SPEED WELL WITH SUPAKART

The Mobile Aid with Children in Mind  
★ Suitable for ages 6-Adult  
★ A Battery Operated Vehicle



BERKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
(Speedwell Enterprises)  
FREEPOST, Slough SL1 3BR  
Telephone: 0753 72249



## Labour's new Statement

3



## naidex'85

8-9

## Clothes - the big give-away

5



## VIEWPOINT

## Resident speaks out

10

## Society says "No" to MSC pilot scheme

The Spastics Society has led the way in turning down an offer from the Manpower Services Commission to take part in a pilot scheme under the Community Programme.

The "Charities Experiment", as the scheme is called, would allow charities to recruit staff from among long-term unemployed people. Initially there are 1,000 places.

Twenty charities were approached by the MSC and so far The Spastics Society and 3 others have declined the offer.

"Given the conditions of this scheme there is no way that I could recommend that the Society should be involved," said John Cox, the director.

In a letter to the MSC last month he found the scheme "unworkable" on 2 counts.

● The maximum a charity can claim per person per week is £75. This compares unfavourably with the existing community programme where the maximum is around £96. Not only could this reduction lead to lower wages and part-time work but the Society would have to sub-

sidise with time and resources.

● The scheme allows for a person to be employed for only 52 weeks. As a managing agent under the existing community programme, the Society has already pressed for an extension of the limit. If it is to employ more disabled people, which it wants to do, they may need more than 52 weeks to get the full benefit out of the job.

The Society is concerned that the MSC did not consult more widely and openly with voluntary organisations, trade unions, local and health authorities at the planning stage.

It also fears that the Charities Experiment could, in the future, undercut existing community programmes.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations has criticised the scheme for being "ill-conceived and hurried."

Nevertheless, some large charities like Age Concern and MENCAP have gone ahead and made proposals.

"The offer was there and we think it is worth doing," said Gilbert Harrison, MENCAP's administrative and development officer for MSC projects.



Bill Needham

Over four thousand runners take the first hill in the Windsor Great Park Half Marathon.

## Record run set to raise £30,000

4,250 people, more than ever before, competed in the fourth Windsor Great Park Half Marathon last month, which will raise, it is hoped, £30,000 for The Spastics Society.

Sponsored by Mars and Adidas, the run attracted television personalities Jimmy Savile and Stu Francis.

Winner of the main marathon

was Steve Anders from St Helens Athletics Club who took 1 hour 6 minutes. Some people took 5 hours.

"There was a fabulous atmosphere, with so many people together with one common aim," says organiser Alysia Hunt, the Society's Appeals Officer for Berkshire.

Her Windsor office has

directly benefitted from the event already.

A photocopying machine salesman and his friend, who had previously tried in vain to get the office to buy a copier, persuaded Alysia Hunt to let them enter the race so that they could raise the necessary £600 for the Society. And they did.

Disabled people race, page 15

## JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE DISABLED....



... there's no limit to your choice of holiday for you, your family or friends, when you go with Threshold. Send for our 1986 Brochure, Bigger and Better than ever before. There's bound to be something for you.



As featured on the ITV "WISH YOU WERE HERE" Programme

For FREE colour brochure send this coupon NOW! or Telephone 061-236 9763

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_



ATOL 1512

**Threshold Travel LTD**  
Wrendal House, 2 Whitworth Street West, Manchester. M1 5WX

## Ministers clash with Campaigners

At a "friendly and frank" breakfast meeting in Blackpool last month, government ministers clashed with the Community Care Campaigners over funding community care schemes.

Roger Singleton (Dr Barnardo's), Brian Rix (MENCAP), Chris Heginbotham (MIND) and John Cox (The Spastics Society) criticised existing joint finance arrangements for not providing enough funding. They wanted the government to give bridging finance for community care schemes as recommended by the Select Committee on Social Services last January.

On the government side, Norman Fowler MP, Social Services Secretary, Tony Newton MP, Social Security Minister, Ray Whitney MP, junior minister for social services, and Sir George Young MP of the Environment Department, were not convinced. They would prefer to make existing methods of finance and planning work more effectively, if that was necessary.

The four Campaigners also



Hard talking over breakfast - Norman Fowler makes a point to Chris Heginbotham (centre) while Tony Newton listens.

sought more flexible funding for community care housing schemes. At present, where there is a high ratio of carers to disabled people, housing schemes are not eligible for housing corporation money.

John Cox stressed the role of families in community care. He hoped that Invalid Care Allowance would be extended to married women as a first step towards a comprehensive carers benefit.

Tim Yeo MP, James Couchman MP, and Cllr Pat Case, Chairman of Lancashire County Council, were also at the meeting.

## INSIDE

Local Group Chairman .....	2
Letters to the Editor .....	2
Alf Morris on Labour policy .....	3
Month in Parliament .....	4
Reports .....	4/6/13
Clothes - the big give-away! .....	5
Community transport show .....	6
Ambassador to Poland! .....	7
Naidex '85 .....	8-9
Viewpoint .....	10
Outlook .....	11
Local Group news .....	13
Margaret Morgan .....	14
What's On and Classifieds .....	14



# Letters to the Editor

Disability Now 12 Park Crescent London W1N 4EQ

## Animal experiments

As one who supports The Spastics Society and is a practising vegetarian who abhors violence, I was appalled to read the article in the *Sunday People* on 11 August 1985, stating that The Spastics Society was one of a number of organisations giving financial support to the strobe light experiments on baboons.

Is the *Sunday People* correct in making this claim? If so, was The Spastics Society aware that its investments were being used for this purpose?

I realise that this is an emotive issue and that it is always necessary to refine and improve drugs, particularly those which aim to treat potentially debilitating conditions such as epilepsy. But surely there are more humane methods than those such as the strobe light experiments.

The Spastics Society, which aims to enhance the quality of life for those with and affected by disabilities, should extend this philosophy to all living creatures.

**Pam Davies**

25 Albert Road  
London N4 3RR

*The Spastics Society's Medical Advisory Committee discussed this issue last month and it will be discussed by the Executive Council on 22 November - Editor*

## Trips to London

In the October issue of *Disability Now* under "Share Your Problems", there is a letter about planning a trip to London. Fitzroy Square Family Services and Assessment Centre is mentioned as somewhere where guests may stay in London.

My reason for writing is that our centre in Camberwell, Good Neighbours House, also takes short stay guests who need not be accompanied.

If people are interested, they should contact Good Neighbours House direct at 38 Mary Datchelor Close, Camberwell, London SE5, tel: 01-703 7451.

**Sheila Rawstorne**

Stars Organisation for Spastics  
12 Park Crescent  
London W1N 4EQ

## Stick in the mud

I wonder how many of your readers have had an unfortunate experience concerning the replacement of aids under the NHS.

My tripod sticks were run over by a car in May 1983. This may sound amusing, but the consequences have been extremely frustrating.

The sticks were first issued in 1963, but the company that made them went into liquidation and therefore there is no pattern.

This design was particularly helpful because it is the only tripod stick I know that will fit on to the tread of a normal staircase; usually they are far too wide.

After exploring tripods issued by other manufacturers, I visited Mary Marlborough Lodge, Oxford, with a view to having new ones made.

It was just as well that the old ones had been bronze-welded as a temporary measure because I was told that there was a one year waiting list. This was still in May 1983.

After repeated letters and telephone calls I was told in August 1985 that the plans and photographs taken in 1983 had been lost. Would I please get drawings and photographs done and have them at the workshop by 3 September.

By 16 September I had heard nothing so telephoned, only to be told 3 days later that they would commence work, hopefully, within 3 weeks.

I think this is a pretty disgusting state of affairs and I would like to know how many others have had a similar experience.

After all, one pair of sticks in 22 years isn't exactly stretching the health budget.

**Lin Berwick**

215 Ardleigh Green Road  
Hornchurch  
Essex

## No baneful bear...

May I respond to Sue Sheehy's letter (*Disability Now*, October) in which she refers to the "collecting box syndrome in the patronising guise of a Baneful Bear".

It is far from being a baneful-

## LOCAL GROUP CHAIRMAN

## How to make a Group strong

For nearly 35 years I have survived the warm embrace of Cheltenham and District Spastics' Association and, of course, by virtual umbilical link, The Spastics Society.

Our Group is no less parochial or autonomous - no less "self-willed" - than the next, but one knows full well that its real strength lies in the relationships it forges with other agencies and groups of people, and in its own driving force.

There can be no doubt that for the majority of Groups, the earliest and most potent relationship is with the Society, to which they usually affiliate at an early stage.

In the earlier days, projects like Cheltenham's nursery school and assessment centre, and its day care centre, were made possible by capital support from the Society.

I believe one of the most important driving forces in the life of a Group lies in retaining control of its own projects. Here again, good relationships are essential: professional staff working harmoniously and effectively with volunteers (who are not necessarily amateurs); the achievement of standards of service to disabled people which will compel the interest, attention and side-by-side involvement of statutory services; and, of course, the interest, sympathy and generosity of local people, businesses and other organisations.

An example of how one such relationship works may be illustrated.

The Group felt that many

looking bear as the public has responded most positively to the happy-looking animal sitting on a honey pot.

If Miss Sheehy objects to inviting our friends to support us by way of the collecting box, I need only state that 40,000 site-owners and their customers continue to support us in this way and they are all cheerful givers.

If we did not provide attractive media their support would go elsewhere and many Groups would lose a steady income to which they have become accustomed - and are most grateful for.

**Christopher Robinson**  
Senior Appeals Development Officer  
The Spastics Society

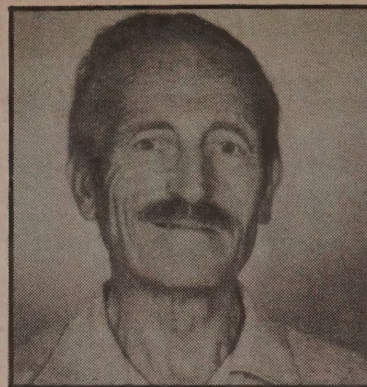
## ... but any other ideas?

As one who had worked hard for many years to persuade The Spastics Society to abandon its child-form collecting dolls, I felt jubilant last year when the Executive Council decided that they would all be replaced within 2 years. We committed ourselves to finding collecting media which did not have a human shape.

Why abandon the child-dolls? In essence, because they present the wrong image.

First, the Society now stresses "integration" - in all its aspects. The dolls were doing us a disservice by identifying disabled people only as children and making it more difficult for us to take our place in the adult world.

Second, the days of "begging"



Richard Sharp

people with disabilities need information over a wide area, from allowances to the provision of ground-floor loos, from holidays for disabled people to aids in the home.

Discussion with our local social services department produced an office, with the Group funding the salary of an adviser and a telephone. Three years later, we have reached the point where our adviser sits with the social services physical handicap team, to the clear benefit of many disabled people.

A local group which has been operating for some time should have a good idea of the numbers and needs of cerebral palsied people living in its area. Out of this knowledge future needs can be assessed and plans laid.

With this in mind, the Cheltenham group 10 years ago appointed a welfare officer to help towards meeting current needs.

But after a while, we suspected that this was not enough.

With the advent of a new welfare officer we changed the terms of reference and job specification. A "seek out and serve" policy was adopted.

The application of this policy by a diligent, resourceful and thoughtful welfare officer has resulted in the "discovery" of over 120 cp people previously unknown to us - or to anyone else as a single group.

are past.

Third, using these dolls in the street to raise money damages the Society's image in the eyes of other disabled people. It may also stop many cerebral palsied people making contact at all.

Why use a bear?

If you want to have outdoor collecting objects, and don't want to use the human form, then it has to be an animal or a make-believe figure. We have started off with a honey-bear which seemed harmless. He is not being identified WITH us. He is merely collecting FOR us!

If anyone has an idea for a new shape - something which can stand on the street without getting broken or vandalised and which attracts money without being pathetic - please let us know.

**Valerie Lang**  
Flat 1  
28 Lofting Road  
London N1 1ES

## "Willy" Oliver

Many people will have been saddened by the news of Brian ("Willy") Oliver's death (*Disability Now*, September).

It was Brian and Margaret, his wife, who between them broke through the barrier of narrow-minded attitudes and opened doors which enabled many disabled people to express their natural feelings and emotions for the first time.

That was 13 years ago, through the film *Like Other People*, which featured their life at a residential centre. It told most poignantly their love for each other, but it also showed the

This, as one might expect, has galvanised the Group into action.

First priority is a project for high-dependency, residential accommodation in the community, which will initially offer short term relief to parents who have cared for their heavily handicapped sons and daughters at home over many years. Continuing care will be available when the parents feel they are unable to carry the load.

This project again involves a pooling of resources: capital funding by the Group, revenue funding by the DHSS.

Already the local community, which has been kept informed of the project, is offering financial help with furnishing. Help will also, doubtless, be sought from the Regional Fund.

As with other projects, the Group will retain an active role in the life and management of St Vincent's Lodge, but in partnership with residents, staff and representatives of statutory bodies and others.

However satisfying this kind of activity may sound, its achievement is only one minor step along an almost infinite trail of need. Employment, a meaningful life for those who are unable to work, post-16 education, true integration at all levels - all are urgently needed.

Many of these needs can, I believe, be tackled at Group level. Many of them require action at Group level.

The Society is providing us with fresh reinforcements in the form of development officers, 25 of whom are already in post, with 6 more coming next year.

If we in the Groups can liaise better with the Society and with statutory and other authorities through these officers, it must lead to more effective work at all levels.

For we have to get it right at all levels - group, region and headquarters - if we are to be seen as one great Society.

frustration, anger and resentment disabled people feel at having to "conform" to pre-conceived notions of acceptability.

It was one of the Society's most successful films, in terms of impact and distribution.

Not only has it given encouragement and hope to many over the years; it has also influenced people's thinking in places like Australia and Japan.

As part of The Open University's course, "The Handicapped Person in the Community", it has been repeated on television at least once a year.

We became acquainted with Brian and Margaret through making the film and have since become fairly close friends.

Their married life together has been a continuation of the film's theme: an outstanding example of how grit and determination - and most important, deep and mutual love - can overcome all obstacles and sometimes produce miracles.

Brian was, on the surface, a quiet and unassuming character, yet he possessed an almost unique sensitivity and held many passionate feelings about people and the injustice, inequality and hatred of the world in which we live. Some of these feelings found expression in his poetry and prose.

Through his life, supported and helped by Margaret, many must have discovered how to express their own joy and happiness.

**David and Doreen Edwards**  
6 Butts Close  
Marnhull  
Dorset DT10 1QB

# OUTDOOR EDUCATION COURSES & ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Churchtown Farm is a Spastics Society Centre.



THIS WINTER AND SPRING

All levels of ability and degree of handicap catered for in winter and summer. From £70.00 per 7 night week at a purpose built centre offering full central heating, heated pool, excellent food and accommodation. Activities include sailing, riding, rock-climbing, canoeing, swimming, camping, bird watching, natural history, photography, painting, pottery etc.

Brochure available from  
The Administrator,  
Churchtown Farm  
Field Studies Centre, Lanlivery,  
Bodmin, Cornwall.





Alf Morris

# "Our commitment is to a new and comprehensive income scheme for disabled people"

Alf Morris, MP, a former Minister for the Disabled, discusses Labour's new statement on disability

Like all my Front Bench colleagues who met them in Bournemouth, I was delighted to see Sir John Cox, Chris Heginbotham, Brian Rix and Roger Singleton there as representatives of Community Care Campaigners.

They put the case for care in the community for adults with mental disabilities as eloquently and adroitly as the Select Committee on Social Services urged it upon the Government in their report last January.

It is a powerful case that merits the backing of those in all parties who want to subordinate rhetoric to the urgent task of making more humane provision for some of the most needful of disabled people.

The meeting in Bournemouth was well timed. It took place on the day (in fact immediately before) the Labour Conference's debate on social policy. It also coincided with the publication of *As of Right*\*, our new call for full citizenship for people with disabilities.

*As of Right* traces the origins, growth and limitations of state provisions; emphasises the importance of the voluntary sector now and in the future; details the cost of the Thatcher years (to the statutory and voluntary sectors alike); and sets the agenda for a better future both for disabled people themselves and those who care for them.

Looking to the future, the new Labour statement deals not only with the pressing need for adequate funding of the services required for a viable policy of community care, but also with our commitment to a new and comprehensive income scheme for disabled people. It will be a scheme that provides adequate

benefit levels for *all* people with disabilities, whatever the nature or cause, as of right and without reference to marital status, contribution record or means tests.

The statement includes protection against hurtful discrimination and gives full recognition to the rights of disabled people for housing, mobility, access, employment, education and leisure.

In every case, the message is bold and clear: the more you help disabled people to help themselves, the more they can contribute to industry and society to the benefit not only of themselves but of their fellow citizens as well.

The consequence, says *As of Right*, of not giving disabled people the right help, in the right place and at the right time, is as self-defeating as it is inhumane.

The statement challenges local organisations of the Labour Movement to look at their practices as they affect people who are disabled: "Are meetings held in accessible places? What steps are taken to reflect the views of disabled people in decision-making in your branch? A useful

starting point might be to invite a speaker from a local organisation of disabled people... to develop awareness of disability in the Labour Movement."

The trade unions are asked to play their full part and co-opt disabled people on to council committees and to provide the support they require to work as fully

participating members.

Labour councils are also urged to review their equal opportunities policies as they relate to disability, not just in employment, but in grant-giving to voluntary organisations, access to all local authority buildings and full implementation of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act.

as between them.

Among the unemployed - now the longest queue in Britain and still growing - the most daunting problems are those of disabled people seeking work. The same applies among other needful groups. For example, where the parent or child is disabled in a one-parent family, that family will inevitably have problems and needs over and above those of the generality of one-parent families.

The question will be: *where is the money coming from?*

Our answer is not just to promise, but to point to the record of the last Labour Government. What we did before we are entitled to be trusted to do again.

Our expenditure on cash benefits and services went up from £590m in 1973-74 to £2,160m in 1979-80. At the same time, we made it impossible for our successors to escape still further spending on the 4 new cash benefits we introduced.

We more than trebled our spending on cash benefits alone in 5 years of office in which, by common consent, unprecedented new help was given to disabled people and their families, as well as to the voluntary organisations that work in their service.

That is our credential for seeking support now for the agenda set out in Labour's new policy statement, which I hope will be widely read by readers of *Disability Now*.

It is an urgent call not to reflection but to *action*.



Final point after Bournemouth breakfast - Harriet Harman MP, Roger Singleton (Dr Barnardo's), Chris Heginbotham (MIND), and John Cox (The Spastics Society).

Bournemouth News & Picture Service

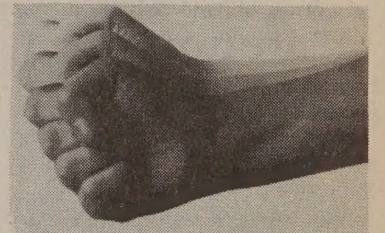


Last minute joke - Dr John Cunningham MP (right), with Frank Dobson MP (centre) and Brian Rix (MENCAP).

It would be of much help to disabled people if other parties were to address *their* local activities as frankly.

As a former Minister for the Disabled, I know very well how strong and compelling other claims on the resources of Britain's next Labour Government will be and, in particular, those of other disadvantaged groups: the unemployed, the frail and elderly, widows and one-parent families among them.

Yet, as *As of Right* makes pikestaff plain, the claims and needs of disabled people must rank among the highest for any Labour Government. That is because, for a party whose authentic language (as Aneurhan Bevan said) is that of priorities, we must look *within* groups as well



From *As of Right*

\**As of Right* by Michael Meacher MP, Alf Morris MP and Margaret Beckett MP, published by Russell Press, 95p, is available from Alan Meale, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

## Baying for the moon?

Dr John Cunningham MP, Shadow Spokesman on the Environment, Alf Morris MP, Frank Dobson MP, and Harriet Harman MP, from the Shadow DHSS team, were among Labour Party representatives at the Community Care Campaigners breakfast meeting in Bournemouth on 1 October.

Attitudes, families, planning and finance were again the main topics of discussion.

The four charity directors received a sympathetic hearing. However, Frank Dobson thought that they were "baying for the moon" to ask for a clear division of responsibility between health and social services departments in community care services.

Everyone agreed that concern should be expressed not about the overlap of responsibilities but about the gap in provision.

Dr John Cunningham challenged the Community Care Campaigners to set out specific proposals for housing mentally handicapped people in the community which were costed and planned. Examples of good practice and models of care will be given to Labour's environment team.

There was a discussion about the need for greater collaboration between Government departments responsible for community care provision.

Alf Morris saw collaboration existing at local level in some areas in the form of a "disabled persons officer".

John Tizard from Bedfordshire County Council pointed out that some local authorities have to liaise with up to 7 health districts so collaboration is difficult.

Harriet Harman felt that a new Labour Government should tackle this problem as a matter of urgency to ensure that initiatives are taken "from the person up and not department down."

The Community Care Campaigners were anxious to dispel any fears among health service unions that jobs would be lost as a result of growth in community care services. A meeting with the unions will be arranged.

It was agreed that the motion on mental health and handicap which was to be discussed at Conference later that day was disappointingly negative. The emphasis was on halting hospital closures when it could have been worded to encourage adequate provision in the community.

A friendly and constructive meeting ended with John Cunningham inviting the four charities to consult further with the different spokesmen after the Shadow cabinet elections.

Amanda Jordan



### Miracle No. 2

Cerebral palsy sufferer Aileen Harper, 28, has astounded doctors for the second time in two-and-a-half years by giving birth to her second daughter, Ashley. *The Northern Echo, Darlington, 26 June - Debra Ziegler*

Disease victim Claire faces new struggle... Following a lifelong struggle against a crippling disease, a 23-year-old Wadebridge woman now faces another struggle to go on an adventure of a life-time. Claire Tregaskis... has been selected to take part in Operation Raleigh, a four-year, round-the-world expedition. *Headline and news story, Cornish Guardian, July - Andrew Ross*

The Scottish Council for Spastics... has forced the community to recognise the condition of Cerebral Palsy and the ways in which sufferers from this still incurable disease can take their places in the community. *Charity, June - Mary Wilkinson*

**WESSEX MEDICAL EQUIPMENT COMPANY LIMITED**

Dept. 34  
Budds Lane  
Industrial Est.  
Romsey  
Hampshire  
(0794) 522022

**TRAVELMASTER HOIST**

**STAIRSEATS**

**MAN. OF ELECTRICAL HOISTS, STAIRSEATS AND LIFTS. AGENTS FOR THE MEDIC BED. POOL LIFTS. ELECTRIC DOOR OPENERS.**



## 72,000 disabled people find jobs

The Manpower Services Commission found jobs for 72,000 disabled people last year. This is 3 per cent more than in the previous year.

Figures released last month show that job centre staff, including disablement resettlement officers, accounted for 38,000 jobs. An estimated 23,500 found employment themselves, and over 10,000 were placed on the Community Programme.

13,222 disabled people attended employment rehabilitation courses and 29 per cent of those who completed courses resettled into jobs or went on to Community Programme or the Youth Training Scheme.

The Job Introduction Scheme showed a 10 per cent increase to a total of 2,033 people. Under the scheme, £45 is paid to employers towards the wage of a disabled person for a trial period of about 6 weeks. The average of those who retain their jobs with the company after 6 months is 60 per cent.

The number of young disabled people entering YTS was 5,405.

## Drop in long-stay

The number of mentally ill and mentally handicapped people in hospital fell by 35,000 between 1974 and 1984, according to a new DHSS Statistical Bulletin (No 5/85).

Norman Fowler claimed that this showed a clear trend away from long-stay hospital treatment towards short-term hospital care with easy re-admission or out patient treatment if needed.

## MONTH IN PARLIAMENT



### HOUSE OF COMMONS

## Norman Fowler fails to get away with it

Norman Fowler, the Social Services Secretary, was forced into retreat last month when his attempt to re-introduce new limits for board and lodging before 4 November were foiled.

During Parliament's recess, 2 court cases had gone against the government.

A High Court judge had ruled that Mr Fowler's method of introducing board and lodging limits in April had been unlawful, and a social security tribunal had found in favour of a young couple whose benefits had been reduced.

The government is appealing against the High Court decision and it will be heard later this month.

Mr Fowler's attempt to circumvent the High Court ruling by re-introducing the regulations for new claimants was blocked on 23 October by the all-party Commons Statutory Instruments Committee, which

vets new regulations. It found that Mr Fowler was acting illegally in the light of the High Court ruling. (Michael Meacher, Labour's social security spokesperson, had already said that the regulations were "clearly shot through with legal flaws".)

Nevertheless, Mr Fowler pressed ahead, using Sir Patrick Mayhew, the solicitor-general, to argue his case with the committee.

But the committee stood firm, and Mr Fowler was forced to withdraw the regulations from debate on 29 October, Parliament's last day.

Now the government will be under pressure to postpone introducing new regulations until after the High Court judgement.

Both court cases have implications for people living in residential care on board and lodging allowances. Indeed, the solicitor in one case is now representing a woman with Down's Syndrome who lives in residential care and is appealing against the limits.

The DHSS guidelines to local offices make it clear that every applicant will have to go to a tribunal if they wish to appeal against the limits; there will be no automatic repayment of arrears or updating of the benefits to the legal rate set in November 1983.

Baroness Jeger (Labour) accused the government of illegal procedure in the Lords on 14 October. But Baroness Trumpington (Conservative) argued that because the government was taking the case to appeal it was normal practice for the Secretary of State to suspend tribunal awards.

### HOUSE OF LORDS

## Tobacco advertising

On 22 October, Lord Ennals (Labour) asked the Government what progress had been made on the new voluntary agreement being negotiated with the tobacco industry and why there had not been wider consultation over its provisions.

He also spoke movingly about the recent deaths of 53 people at Bradford Football Club which he claimed were due directly to cigarette smoking, and of a ward colleague who had just died of lung cancer.

He was also worried that smoking was increasing among children.

Baroness Hooper, replying for the Government, argued that private talks were the best means of securing effective controls.

Only 34 per cent of the adult population now smoked, she said, and since the first voluntary agreement smoking had declined among men by one-third and among women by one-fifth. However, Lord Airedale (Labour) thought that no other killer of 100,000 people a year would be allowed to go unrestricted.

Lord Rea (Labour) was also sceptical. He pointed out that the Exchequer receives £5 billion from tobacco taxation and that the DHSS saves £1 billion from the pensions it would otherwise have paid to the 100,000 people who die from smoke-related diseases.

Brian Lamb

## More health visitors, not less

The Spastics Society has expressed concern that fewer health visitors are being recruited and has called for an increase in present staff levels.

It was giving evidence last month to the government's Community Nursing Review. The Review is examining the role of health visitors and other community nursing services.

Health visitors have an important role in providing health education, advice and care. They advise pregnant women about good antenatal and postnatal care which is essential in the fight to reduce perinatal mortality.

The community nursing services also help in the prevention of handicap through good antenatal and postnatal care and they advise the parents of handicapped children.

Health visitors are already over-stretched; to reduce their number would risk reducing the service they provide.

The Society also wants community nurses to receive more training on the particular problems faced by people with a mental or physical handicap.

It argues, for example, that there should be more locally based community health visitors to specialise in working with children with disabilities and to liaise with other agencies.

There should be better joint planning between health services, local authority services, voluntary organisations and consumers, says the Society.

Brian Lamb

## REPORTS

### ICPS conference

## Rare humility

In September I had the privilege of being one of the 220 delegates from 15 countries to attend the International Cerebral Palsy Society's conference in Dublin.

The topic for deliberation was communication for the disabled through technology.

As I sit writing this report in Dublin Airport, a young child is very effectively communicating her views on the brother who has just taken her bag of crisps. This is a nice reminder of a recurring message at the conference — communication may take place in many ways.

The tone was refreshing. Most speakers avoided the traditional conference style of "This is what I've done — isn't it marvellous."

Instead, they described their mistakes as well as their successes, and looked into what with hindsight they should have done. Had they achieved their goals? Had they significantly improved the quality of life of the person?

Penny Parnes, Director of the Augmentative Communication Service Centre in Toronto, Canada, described a model of service provision which can only be envied. Clients are assessed by an interdisciplinary team which considers the needs of the whole child — seating, mobility, face-to-face communication, written communication, education and his or her family needs. Equipment is loaned and its value monitored. The clients are reviewed at regular intervals so that changing needs can be met. The equipment is never left gathering dust.

Arleen Kraat from Queens College, New York, assessed the issues from her Isaacs study of changing from language boards to computer communication de-

vices. She drew attention to the variety of locations and circumstances in which we wish to express ourselves — for example, in the home, the car, the toilet, phoning in an emergency and during intimate situations.

She questioned whether we are developing the non-verbal skills of our clients to this range of circumstances and whether the electronic aids we provide actually meet this range of need.

Other speakers considered the importance of seating, the parents' role, Third World needs, international co-operation on funding of research and employment problems.

The main message of the lecture from Greg Vanderheiden of the Trace Research and Development Centre, Wisconsin, USA, summed up the conference for me. We have the technology, but are we making the best use of it? And how are we going to provide it to all those who could benefit?

**Janet Larcher,**  
Education Development Officer  
(Microelectronics)  
The Spastics Society

### GLC conference on disability law



## They're off to a good start

The first ever conference on Disability Law and Legal Services was both stimulating and innovative.

Organised by the GLC's Disability Resource Team, and held at the Kings Fund Centre on 18 October, it had two central aims:

firstly, to help draw together the highly fragmented areas of the law which specifically relate to disabled people; and secondly to bring isolated advice workers and lawyers together so that a network of contacts could be built up.

The conference covered a wide range of subjects. There were workshops on employment, education, mental health tribunals, benefits, rights in institutions and housing.

The full conference sessions looked at representing people with disabilities and rights in the community. Speakers from MIND and The Spastics Society led the discussion on anti-discrimination legislation.

The wide range of topics gave an opportunity to learn about many new areas. The explanation of the role of advocates and William Bingley's account of mental health legislation were to me both new and fascinating. When I'm sectioned I'll now know what to do!

This was one of those very rare occasions where one can truthfully say that the conference was a tremendous success.

To follow up this achievement, the GLC Disability Resource Team has set up a planning group on law and disability. It is particularly concerned that networks of contacts are maintained.

**Eileen Fry**  
Employment Research Officer  
The Spastics Society

*Conference packs are available free from the Disability Resource Team at the GLC, Room 93, County Hall, London SE1 7PB. Tel: 01-633 7101/8369*

### Hospital Physicists' Association meeting

## Who is handicapped?

This intensive, one-day meeting held last month was to promote

current awareness of the applications of microcomputers for people with disability.

The themes included rehabilitation, assessment and aids for living, but George Tomlinson from Leeds General Infirmary put the whole topic into proper context with his opening talk, "Who is handicapped: you, me or the computer?"

Drawing upon his own experience, he raised points which professionals in this field sometimes overlook. For example, by classifying handicap, the expectation of someone's ability to achieve may be immediately reduced. The computer has shown how wrong such an assumption can be, but computer programs can themselves start to restrict the level of achievement.

Liz Dymond of Guy's Hospital presented a highly illustrated survey of microelectronic-based communication aids, having first shown where they fit into the communication spectrum, and how the communication aids centres assess a client.

"Who supplies them?" and "How does the user operate it?" were problems which recurred frequently in later talks.

Despite what the establishment says, currently there is no simple answer to the supplier. But Roger Potter from St George's Hospital, Lincoln, tackled the second problem with a succinct presentation on the development of the "Twinkle" eye-switch and the criteria which should be applied in developing aids and input devices.

The safety aspects were explained clearly by Justin McCarthy of Cardiff Royal Infirmary. Safety is important when equipment covered by different British Standards are coupled together.

Speech recognition has a certain appeal as an input for environmental control units (ECUs), but as Bob Damper of Southampton University pointed

out, it may be inappropriate or even dangerous in other situations. He went on to outline the problems in this field, and discussed how current techniques were being developed for ECUs.

Jim Sandhu from the Handicapped Persons Research Unit, Newcastle, gave an overview of the activities there, and then described its two databases, BARD (British Database for Research into Aids for the Disabled) and BARDSOFT (covering software in this field).

The interest in good quality synthesised speech was reflected in the paper presented by Dave Keating from the West of Scotland Health Board. His Department has developed a range of low cost, limited vocabulary, portable speech aids which has proved useful in initiating and sustaining conversation between non-vocal people both face-to-face and over the telephone. The technique enables any desired phrases to be electronically encoded from natural speech (including Glaswegian!), and clearly reproduced at the touch of a button.

A major issue was raised by Carol Roberts from Odstock Hospital (rehabilitation) and Lesley Hodgkinson from Leeds General Infirmary (speech therapy). Both areas have little or no useful software. Programs are needed to help rehabilitate young adult head injury patients and stimulate pre-school, multiple-handicapped youngsters.

The major blemish of this otherwise very encouraging and useful meeting was the total lack of discussion time.

Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that hospital medical physics departments are playing an increasingly important role in the field of microcomputers and people with disability.

Peter Watts

UMIST

Continued on page 6



Everyone who buys clothes regularly is affected by fashion, by what designers decide is "in" this year, this season.

Young people are probably the best examples of "image" and how to use it: they are the real trendsetters of street fashions. You may not like the image they project, but more than any other group their clothes are a statement of who they are.

By contrast, disabled people as a group seem to have no concept of image or fashion, no cohesive thought or skill in putting clothes together.

So many disabled people dress inappropriately, in clothes their grandmothers would think twice about – dingy patterns, old cardigans, short socks.

And men are no better. The other day I saw a man in a smart suit with last week's dinner down his tie.

There are, of course, honourable exceptions.

I am not suggesting that there should be a single image for all disabled people. People have different styles, different personalities and different needs, and clothes should reflect those differences.

Nor am I suggesting that every disabled person should suddenly become a "clothes horse" or take to high fashion.

But an interest in your appearance reflects an interest in yourself and others, and it is essential if you want to make a favourable impression on other people. A poor first impression is very hard to overcome.

## Why so bad?

Why as a group are disabled people so bad at projecting their true personalities? I think there are 3 main reasons.

**Poor self-perception.** It is difficult to look in the mirror and say, "This is the real me". The defects leap out and overshadow everything else. If you look hard enough and are sufficiently depressed, the Hunchback of Notre Dame suddenly seems beautiful.

**STOP!** Take another look with a positive, friendly, loving attitude towards yourself. Not quite so bad, is it?

Maybe there are some features which you would rather not dwell on, but *everyone* has some good features on which to build. And that is the great advantage of clothes: with the right colours, styles, shapes, you can emphasise those good points and draw the eye away from problem areas.

**Lack of money.** We all have to spend some money on clothes. The secret is not to waste it; to buy carefully with an eye to how the garment will fit in with others in your wardrobe. My advice is to buy the very best you can afford. Go for quality rather than quantity.

**Lack of access.** Access has improved considerably over the past 10 years and most shop assistants are helpful and considerate. If they are not, then take your business elsewhere.

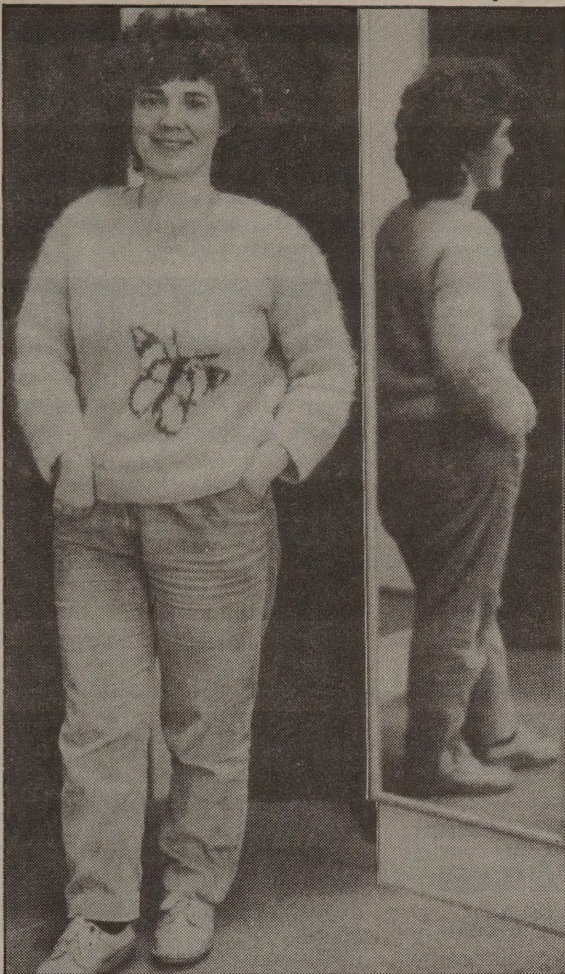
If you find that shopping is virtually impossible, why not look through mail order catalogues? Even if you don't buy from them you can get an idea of what is available and send your "shopper" out to buy what you want and not what they think you want.

A fashion magazine bought twice a year (spring and autumn) will help give you an idea of the shapes, colours and styles coming into the shops. Don't be put off by the too beautiful models and the way-out hairstyles and make-up. Learn to look beyond these to the themes and underlying trends.

# Clothes – the big give-away!

"If the image you present to the world shows care and attention, then others will want to know you better," says Marian Bowen. Here is her advice

Alistair Walker



Karen Bowen, 22, has right-side hemiplegia. Here she is in her usual outfit of sweater, trousers and sneakers.



After the team has done its work – Karen wears an evening two-piece in easy-care polyester, with bead necklaces, dangly earrings and comb.

## Choosing fabrics

There is a temptation for disabled people and those who shop for them to buy only easy-care fabrics. But in terms of look and feel, easy-care fabrics have many disadvantages.

Certainly, pure fabrics have their problems: they can look crumpled (although some people pay a great deal of money to achieve that look) and they do need more care.

However, if you want the comfort of pure wool or cotton, why not go ahead and buy it?

If something needs dry cleaning, it may not be practical for every-day, but what about the special occasion when it could give a boost to your morale?

Good fabrics "behave better". If you take reasonable care, they are likely to last longer than cheaper fabrics and you won't

have to try so hard to look good.

You can often pick up excellent clothes with lots of wear left in them at second-hand shops or even jumble sales in well-to-do areas. But don't be tempted to buy something that doesn't suit you just because it is cheap!

We all make a mistakes. My own rule is, if I haven't worn something for a year, I try to analyse why and then get rid of it. It is demoralising to have a wardrobe full of clothes with nothing to wear.

## The right colour

A few years ago I took little interest in clothes and wore dull colours which helped me to fade into the background.

The turning point came when a friend decided to train as a professional colour/image consultant. In 6 months she revolutionised the appearance of all the

women, and some of the men, in my office.

The "colour concept", as I know it, is an American idea by Carole Jackson, author of the best-seller, *Colour Me Beautiful*. She matches a person's skin tone, eye and hair colour to a colour palette representing one of the four seasons: spring, summer, autumn, winter.

As with many good ideas, it has now caught on with other groups.

It certainly works for me. When you know your "season" you also know the colours of make-up, jewellery, clothes and artificial hair colour that suit you. Your appearance improves greatly and it does not depend on budget, social status or time.

## Accessories

Accessories used to be thought of as shoes, handbags



Karen's casual outfit is a trouser suit in grey stripes – the stripes giving an illusion of height – and a check shirt. Epauettes and bow tie draw attention up to the face.



Skirt and sweater teamed with a scarf looks both smart and casual. Add a hat for more formality. Don't be afraid to mix checks with patterns and different textures.



For smart occasions, a checked suit with a peacock blue blouse and matching tights. Again, the team added interest at the neck with a scarf and earrings and a bead necklace.

and the occasional piece of good jewellery. All that has changed. Now cheap and colourful accessories – weird and wonderful earrings, bangles, necklaces, bow-ties, ties – draw an outfit together and add extra zing.

For example, a brightly coloured scarf or tie and earrings will draw the eye up to your face.

If you have a dribbling problem, why not use a pretty scarf instead of an apron? It is easy to wash and can be changed daily.

## Specialised help

There are many people who can give you information and advice about specialised clothes, for example your local occupational therapist.

The Disabled Living Foundation has just updated its book, *Clothes Sense for Disabled People of All Ages* which has lots of useful tips, ideas and addresses.

Fashion at the moment favours disabled people. The loose, unstructured styles and "Do as you please" attitude mean that most people should find something that is comfortable and attractive.

Appearance is a pathway to you as an individual. If the image you present to the world shows care and attention, then others will want to know you better.

## Golden rules for shopping

★ Never shop when you are hungry. More bad decisions are likely on a rumbling stomach! And don't get too tired. It's better to split the shopping up into several days or half-days if possible.

★ Try to take along one or, better still, two people whose clothes sense and taste you admire. They will help you to make a good survey of what is around.

★ Try to buy things which co-ordinate and are "right" for particular times and occasions. Take a look at your wardrobe and make a detailed plan of what you think is missing, what you actually need and what you would like if funds stretch that far. Not to plan is to have "nothing to wear" for a special event.

★ Work out a system for shopping that suits you. If you really hate it, save up and twice a year (March/April, September/October) when new stock arrives in the shops go on a spree – not forgetting the detailed plan.

★ Don't feel pressured to buy clothes because there is no accessible changing room. Ask to try on the things at home and exchange them or return them with no obligation. If they won't let you, unless you are sure the garment is right, leave it in the shop.

Marian Bowen is a development and research officer for The Spastics Society's Alpha Advisory Committee. She wants to thank Diane Walker, a professional colour/image consultant, and Pam Lane, manageress of Country Casuals, Shrewsbury for their help.

The team welcomes letters from readers who have fashion problems. Please address them to Marian Bowen, c/o Disability Now, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

Clothes Sense For Disabled People of All Ages by Peggy Turnbull and Rosemary Ruston, £9 (including p&p) from DLF (Sales) Ltd, 45 East Hill, Wandsworth, London SW18 2QZ.

Clothing for Wheelchair Users is a new information/training pack. Contact Mrs Peggy Turnbull, DLF, tel: 01-289 6111.



Nigel Smith



New Postbus: no good for wheelchair users.

## Community transport is going places!

Nigel Smith reports

Community transport is a rapidly growing sector of the unofficial welfare state. In 10 years a few groups have escalated into hundreds, and for disabled people that means a growing number of dial-a-rides all over the country and more vehicles fitted with tail-lifts for group hire.

A watershed was reached at the end of September when *Community Transport Quarterly* organised an Exhibition and Trades Fair in Birmingham to coincide with the Fifth National Community Transport Conference.

The exhibition was the largest ever held by the community transport sector, and the conference attracted some 300 people, mainly from community transport and dial-a-ride groups, but with local authority representatives as well.

Among the interesting things to see was the latest design of Postbus on the Freight Rover stand.

This design is based on the latest Sherpa 285 wide-bodied van with a conversion by Robin Hood Vehicles. It is basically good, but I was disappointed that the entrance step was so high that some people will find it very difficult to get in and out, while wheelchair users will be excluded because there is no tail-lift.

The Post Office is providing a valuable service in rural areas, but shouldn't it have vehicles that can be used by anyone - that have, in other words, a tail-lift or ramp?

If the Post Office is unwilling to bear the cost, then the Government should give it a grant for the purpose.

The major innovations at the exhibition were in passenger safety, an area that has been neglected for far too long.

The system pioneered by Henderson-Linwell was again on display, and I was most impressed by the C. N. Unwin prototype as well.

This is a new integral wheelchair restraint system which comprises an anchorage frame that pivots out from the side of a vehicle into position when a

wheelchair user boards. The restraint clamps automatically into the vehicle's floor tracking and the wheelchair user can then lock the wheelchair into the restraint. This is a ratchet system operated by a lever. Inertia reel seat belts are included.

The first prototype will go to the Federation of London Dial-A-Rides for testing next year and the manufacturers hope to market it in 1986 at around £300.

Another good safety innovation was the inertia reel safety belt system developed by Transport Seating of Birmingham. The belts pull up from the bottom and so can be kept out of the way when not in use. They are suitable for fixed and moveable seats.

The importance of proper restraint systems both for wheelchairs and their occupants was highlighted in a video shown at the exhibition. Tests conducted by the Transport and Road Research Laboratory reveal what happens to unrestrained wheelchair users in accidents.

The results were horrifying.

The video should be seen by senior officers and staff of all organisations operating minibuses used by people in wheelchairs.

Two conversions to the current FX4 taxi were on show.

In the FX4W, by London Taxis International, the wheelchair faces towards the back. In the conversion by Phoenix Taxis, which is sponsored by the GLC, it faces forwards, but seemingly at the expense of space for other passengers.

The FX4W seemed more advanced at this stage, but one hopes they both prove successful and are widely used.

Commenting on the conference and the exhibition, Richard Armitage, editor of *Community Transport Quarterly*, said it was the first time the CT sector had demonstrated its size and importance to vehicle manufacturers and converters, and the first time that some manufacturers had been brought face to face with the end users - people with disabilities.



Above: C. N. Unwin's integrated wheelchair restraint system.

Left: Low step and hand rails on Manchester Ring'n'Ride mini-bus converted by Reeve Burgess.

# Counselling, yes. But "co-counselling"?

Hillary Lane went on a course at Castle Priory College last month to find out

Most of us have heard the word "counselling" and have a vague idea of what it means. Few, if any, have heard the word "co-counselling". Unfortunately, many of the people at the beginning of this three-day course did not know the difference either.

Counselling, as I understand it, is a one way process. One person talks about their problem to a counsellor and the counsellor helps to find a solution.

Co-counselling is a two-way process. You take it in turns to be talker and listener for an agreed length of time. No solution to the problems is offered; it is just an opportunity to listen and be listened to.

Much of what we learnt on the course we already knew, but it was presented in a different light.

We looked at our emotions and our self-awareness.

Self-awareness is to do with

knowing your own potential, but this can be hindered by being hurt. When we are hurt this leads to fear, grief and anger.

Normally we are taught to maintain a stiff upper lip, that it is wrong to express our feeling, and so we bottle everything up. Co-counselling allows us to let go of the anger, fear and grief without exploding.

## CASTLE PRIORY

You might think that co-counselling is an extension of a good friendship; we make ourselves available, enabling another to talk freely and confidentially.

On the course we were given a chance to practice what we had been taught. We co-counselled each other on different subjects, each time with a different partner. It showed us

the value of expressing ourselves openly without feeling bad and also giving people space just by listening.

Meg Bond, a tutor with the Human Potential Research Project at Surrey University, had a wonderful way of making us all part of the group. She would get us to do looney things like playing tag in the confines of the lecture room to get the blood moving.

Being with 16 other people, disabled and able-bodied, for 48 hours is rough, especially if you don't know them. But being cared for so well by the staff of Castle Priory out there by the River Thames made the hard grind easier to bear.

We did not come away confirmed co-counsellors; that would take at least a week. It was more like first aid - a little bit of training to help you through and also to whet your appetite.

## REPORTS

Continued from page 4  
**Association of '62 Clubs**  
*reunion conference*

### Never say die

One message which came through strongly over the weekend of 27-29 September was, "It's good to be back." Certainly it was wonderful to see old friends again after a break of more than 5 years.

Many people now involved with The Spastics Society will know nothing about the '62 Clubs.

Bill Hargreaves gave us a trip down memory lane when he spoke about "how it was". He founded the '62 Clubs, appropriately, in 1962 and at one time there were 36 of them around the country.



Bill Hargreaves at the reunion.

The concept was "born" when he was involved in finding employment for cerebral palsy people. He and Margaret Morgan became aware of the difficulties disabled people were having in coping with "real" life.

The clubs were to enable people to be themselves and to encourage them to take their rightful place; they were also to be stepping stones into society, not a final solution.

I was impressed by the quality of the speakers at the conference and in particular Ken Davis of the Derbyshire Coalition of Disabled People. He was amusing and, maybe I am a romantic but, when he spoke of IYDP with its slogan "Full participation and equality", he was quite inspirational.

"Now is the time to claim for ourselves that participation and equality. Disabled people must take these things for themselves - they cannot be achieved by proxy. Disability knows no boundaries - there are in reality no dividing lines!"

As in the past, the staff at Childs Hall, Reading University,

were wonderful, the wine flowed freely courtesy of the Association, and the after dinner speeches were short (well, relatively). It gave me great pleasure when Mary Hargreaves spoke, thanking Marianne West for organising the Conference so efficiently.

The final session on Sunday afternoon was a chance to decide, "Where do we go from here?"

The general feeling was that the '62 Clubs still have a role to play. Adrian Wright suggested that it may be possible to appoint a national co-ordinator and that the Society's development officers might be asked to keep an eye on the remaining 6 clubs.

Marian Bowen

### NW Regional Conference

### Well organised, for those who went

Once again the North West Regional Conference provided an opportunity for delegates to meet and renew old friendships and take part in morning and afternoon discussion groups.

Mrs Joan Williams, chairman of the North-West Regional Committee welcomed us and talked of the Society's activities, both national and regional, over the past year.

Andrew Ross, the marketing director, gave a slide presentation of the results of recent market research into the image of the Society. Some people thought the interview sample of 144 was too small, but they were reassured that it was not unusual.

As in the research findings, there was no overall opinion about whether or not the name of the Society should be changed.

There was a much appreciated addition to the programme when the director, John Cox, told us how the Society, MIND, MENCAP and Dr Barnardo's were getting together for meetings at the party conferences to make politicians fully aware of the needs of disabled people.

Sir John presented Mrs Bessie Rimmer, chairman of South Sef-ton Spastics Society, with the chairman's certificate and thanked her for the 25 years of continuous service to the Society and disabled people.

Delegates then broke up into six different discussion groups dealing with education, employment and its alternatives, the need for a consumer group, benefits and welfare rights, provi-

sion for people with profound mental handicaps and living options.

Shortage of time prevented the groups from giving reports of their findings. It is hoped that the conference report will do so.



Mrs Bessie Rimmer, 84, receives the Chairman's certificate and a bouquet for 25 years' service.

Later Mrs Williams introduced delegates to the new chairman of the North-West Consumer Group, Harold Sharpe.

He was clearly not satisfied with the attendance at consumer group meetings and felt that local spastics affiliated groups would benefit if they attended more meetings.

This was a very well organised conference and the presence of both national and regional officials will, it is hoped, continue.

A very interesting display about Ellerslie Court Holiday Home was produced by the Southport and District Spastics Society. Perhaps other local groups could repeat this at future conferences.

The only disappointment was the low turn out. While it was pleasing to see quite a few representatives from local spastics groups, the attendance was much less than last year. It is hoped that more people will support the next conference.

Ian Williams

### SE Regional Conference

### Post-16: the good and the bad

"Post-16" was the theme of the conference in Southampton on 21 September. We learnt about projects in the region and heard guest speaker Freddie Green, the Director of Education, giving his ideas, hoping to provoke discussion and ideas from the group.

I was encouraged to hear of the work of the Multi-Media Centre in Portsmouth. Supported by the local community,

Continued on page 13



# Ambassador to Poland!

Cycling 10 miles before breakfast in soaking shammy shorts – and he wants to do it all again. Steve Varden gives his view of the London to Warsaw cycling expedition in aid of Cerebral Palsy Overseas

As we rode out of the gates of Buckingham Palace we were lightly washed by a summer shower. Five miles into the 1,170 mile journey this shower had developed into torrential rain which stayed with us for 10 hours.

The hard shoulder of the A2 to Dover appeared to be leading us to Hell through gale force winds and the spray of juggernauts.

The first 10 miles were mildly enjoyable; it gave me a sense of maturity I suppose. "What a man. I am cycling in the wind and rain, laying my life in front of the wheels of fish finger lorries."

Then reality struck, glamour shattered. "What a silly boy I am cycling in the wind and rain, laying my life in front of the wheels of fish finger lorries."

the "ups and downs" of France but the only difficulty was controlling our feelings towards the charming French "drivers".

Lille is an interesting city; here we slept on the concrete floor of a college foyer.

The city is a very modern and almost totally accessible to disabled people. There are ramps, lifts, and hand rails which blend in with the character and architecture of the city instead of appearing as an afterthought, which is so common in this country.

There is also a unique underground metro system which is easily accessible to wheelchairs.

At this point I realise how impossible it is for me to describe the expedition in any detail, purely because we all experi-

A typical day started with Chinese water torture – rain dripping through one's tent. At 5am, after 4½ hours sleep it is not easy to convince oneself that freezing fog and a wet saddle is more desirable than sweet dreams in a warm sleeping bag.

Tents were down and packed away along with suitcases by 5.30am. A cup of tea? Then at 6am pedals were pushed and muscles flexed. This was the one time of the day when a hill or mountain was welcome as it was the only way of raising one's body temperature.

The cold was quite a threat to me; it is difficult to operate brakes when one's hands are frozen onto the handlebars.

We cycled at least 10 miles before breakfast was devoured.

Later in the day intense heat threatened dehydration but buckets of water quenched this.

Perhaps the most enjoyable part of the journey was cycling alongside the River Rhine in Germany. Our tyres were only 10 feet from the river. On either side of us mountains boasted fairy tale castles and rich vineyards.

In places, the narrow cycle path changed or was completely non-existent. Where drainage work was being done our cycles became "rock climbers". A bridge was unsafe so we made a detour down dirt tracks and across corn fields.

I like to tell people that I cycled all the way to Warsaw. This is not entirely true as when we were confronted with 30 stone steps we did give way, dismounted and ascended gracefully on foot.



Steve Varden celebrates arriving in Sicradz, Poland.



Flat out – but in the sun for once! Steve relaxes in Germany.

During the first 2 hours of the 6 week journey I was definitely regretting even hearing about the expedition.

At the end of Day 1 I was so mentally and physically exhausted that I was unable to talk, walk, or even smile at cameras or mayors. A couple of hours sleep and a hot bath gave me enough energy to eat.

By Day 2 I had built up some resistance to the pathetic fallacy. It was a wonderful experience putting dripping wet clothes on at 5am in the morning, especially soaking shammy cycling shorts. Certainly stimulating.

The dreaded hill at Boulogne was negotiated by everyone with a certain amount of ease. Then the sun was generous and our legs responded.

Problems were expected on

enced so much I could write volumes!

One important fact that everyone noted was that "The iron curtain is made out of cotton wool, if it is there at all..."



Victory! The team outside Warsaw's Palace of Culture.

## Urban disability: new research planned

Derek Lancaster-Gaye, director of Cerebral Palsy Overseas, explains the project

Most of the world's largest cities are situated in some of the world's poorest countries.

Central and South American and India have their share of cities with populations over 10 million. Mexico City, the world's largest urban conglomeration, has some 18 million people now and the prospect of 30 million by the end of the century.

Life in these cities is largely determined by poverty and the mistaken belief among those who live in the rural outback that life in the big city must be better and must produce employment.

Urban development has much to answer for, not least the migration of millions from country to town, swelling the already oversized cities to levels that are way past the point of containment.

Inevitably poverty increases, for life in the big city is more expensive. The problems of housing assume a dimension too great for the planners. People

greatly exceed the capacity of local drainage and sanitation – where this exists at all. Malnutrition and disease become a major problem, and the city's street dwellers grow in number until they become an accepted part of city life.

Of course, plans exist for almost every problem. But few are implemented if only because funds are not available.

In the centre of these problems are large numbers of severely disabled people. For some, provision is made by local authority or non-governmental agencies. For the majority, there is no provision at all.

Surprisingly, we know little about the nature of handicap in these large urban environments and if there is to be any sensible planning for the future we must know far more.

That is why CPO, Oxfam and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine are discussing proposals for a detailed research study into disability in

large cities in the developing world.

The study, to start in 1986, may well concentrate on Mexico, Bombay and Nairobi and will look at the incidence and prevalence of various severe disabilities including cerebral palsy. Its task will be to assess the extent to which these disabilities have been brought about or influenced by the large city environments.

The study will include some in depth examination of the problems within local communities as seen by the families and the disabled people themselves.

It is intended that the study will make positive and practical recommendations which can be implemented by city planners of the future and administrators of the present.

This will be CPO's second research study. In conjunction with the World Health Organisation it is currently looking at problems of ageing among persons with cerebral palsy.

## TUBMATE®

### BATH LIFT

The help you need to take a bath.

Requiring only a simple connection to the mains supply for water pressure operation, the TUB-MATE gently lifts and lowers you into and out of the bath, yet can easily be removed. The seat swivels and the control switch is conveniently mounted on the left or right armrest.

Send coupon today for FREE brochure – no stamp needed, or Tel: (04463) 3030

Yes! I'd like to know more about the ASGO TUB-MATE LIFT ☐

Please send details on the ASGO EASY-LIFT CHAIR ☐ ASGO STAIR-GLIDE ☐

Name  DN1185

Address

Tel No

Send to: ASGO Ltd, FREEPOST, COWBRIDGE, SOUTH GLAMORGAN CF7 7ZZ

**ASGO**  
LIMITED





Michael Levinge studies the Kuschall Special which is "unique". The dismantled chair stands behind.



Michael tries out the Batricar Alpha. He found it was fun to drive and could be operated quite easily with one hand.

### Mobility

## DHSS begins to show the bright stuff

Naidex '85 brings good news from the DHSS, long-criticised for the dullness of its wheelchair range. It has commissioned 3 manufacturers, Everest & Jennings, Vessa and Remploy, to design new chairs. The results — **Corby**, **Alton** and a children's chair, **Rossi**, look impressive, but they are still very heavy.

Not so the **Vessa Sprint**, another design for the DHSS, especially for young, active wheelchair users. It looks good.

From Gerald Simmonds comes a chair which I feel is the Rolls-Royce of the chair market, not only in style but also in cost. At £925, the **Kuschall Special** is expensive but totally unique. It was designed in Switzerland by a tetraplegic and tested by athletes. Weighing only 12 kg, and capable of being dismantled in 25 seconds, including the wheels, it can be easily transported in the smallest vehicle. A good colour range too. If the price could be reduced I think this chair would be a real winner.

Apart from these, there appear

to be no real changes in non-electric wheelchairs.

Moving on to battery powered chairs and vehicles, Carter has launched the **Cruiser**. The highlights here are a flexible joystick with fore, aft and height adjustment which controls speed and brakes as well as steering. There is a standard safety belt and red lights flicker when the battery needs recharging. £1,250 without curb climbers. Unfortunately they were too busy to help us on the Carter stand so we didn't get a picture.

At BEC there is the **Supascoota**, a total re-working of the **Scootanova**. It can be dismantled for transport by car and is capable of climbing a gradient of 1 in 6 and 5 in. curbs. At £1,145 it is quite expensive, especially as the sales rep I spoke to did not know if it could be driven one-handed!

The Everest & Jennings **Runaround** was mentioned in

our coverage of the Harrogate Naidex. It has good storage space and auto-brakes but it does not fold as small as the BEC and the arms are immobile. It is cheaper, though, at £980.

The very latest electric vehicle on show was the **Front Runner** by Electric Mobility. This scooter will not be available in the UK until 1986 and is not yet available in the USA. This was its first showing here, and I was told that it will cost £995. Very impressive, but I hope they can do something about the tiller which at the moment is not adjustable.

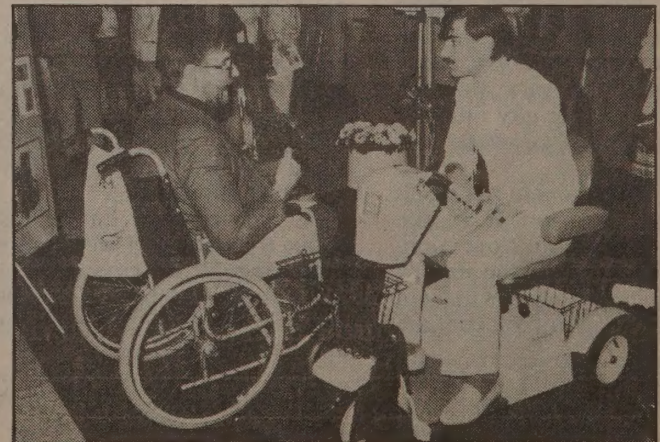
A short word about the rest. If I could afford £2,000+, the **Batricar Alpha** would be my choice — for comfort, luxury and the fun of driving it.

Once again I feel it is a choice between Mobility and Motability, and that this is a decision disabled people should not have to make.

Michael Levinge



Above left: trying out the Electric Mobility Front Runner. Above right: the Vessa Sprint.



Michael talks to E & J's Marketing Manager David Russell who is on the Runaround.



Life is never dull  
with TFH around



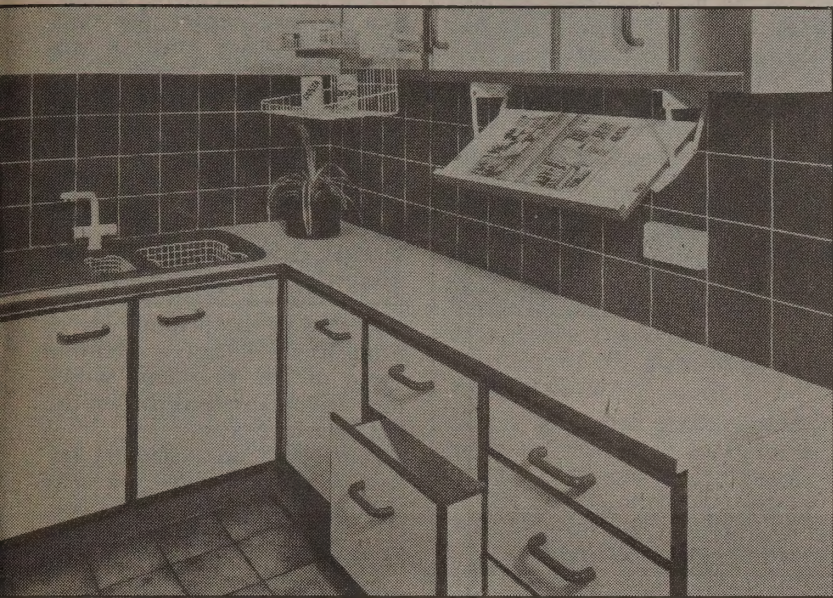
For a free  
catalogue,  
write to

Toys for the Handicapped (8)  
76, Barracks Road,  
Sandy Lane Industrial Estate,  
Stourport-on-Severn,  
Worcestershire DY13 9QB  
Telephone: 02993 78820  
Telex: 336559

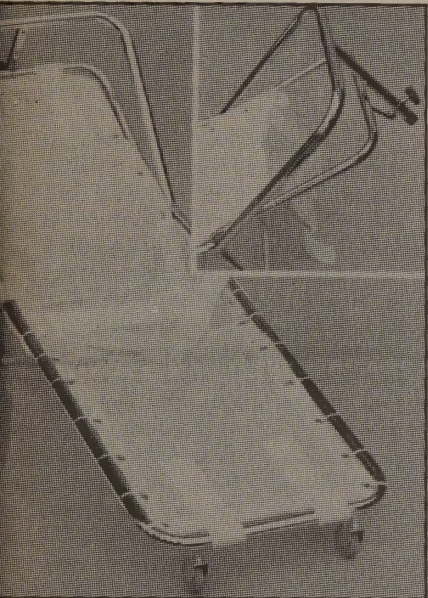


# ex'85

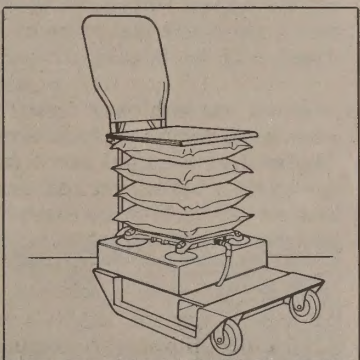
Alexandra Palace, London on 16-18 October. Here Michael Levinge occupational therapist Wendy Chandler and Mandy Scales cast their net and found nothing new in the microelectronics field.



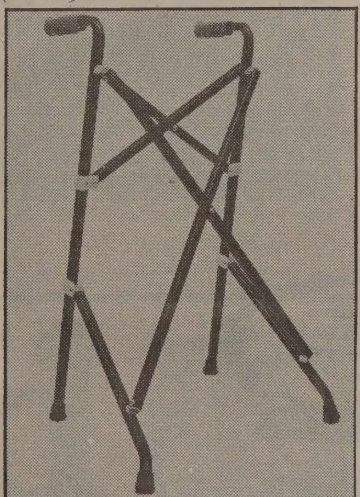
Lexiplan Three Kitchen System has features to assist partially sighted people. Red handles and edges contrast with white surfaces and cupboard doors. Total for kitchen around £1,490. From Nicholls and Clarke Ltd.



Cradle transfers you to and into the bath. Features a back rake adjustment and detachable velcro straps to enable hair washing. £131 from ASM Medic Aids, Picow Industrial Estate, Runcorn, Cheshire.



The New Mangar Booster is a portable, power-operated lift with detachable back-rest. Use as a bath lift, in a wheelchair, on the floor, or with the Booster Trolley (as illustrated). £500 complete. Mangar Aids Ltd, Units 1-3, Presteigne Industrial Estate, Presteigne, Powys. Tel: (0544) 267674.



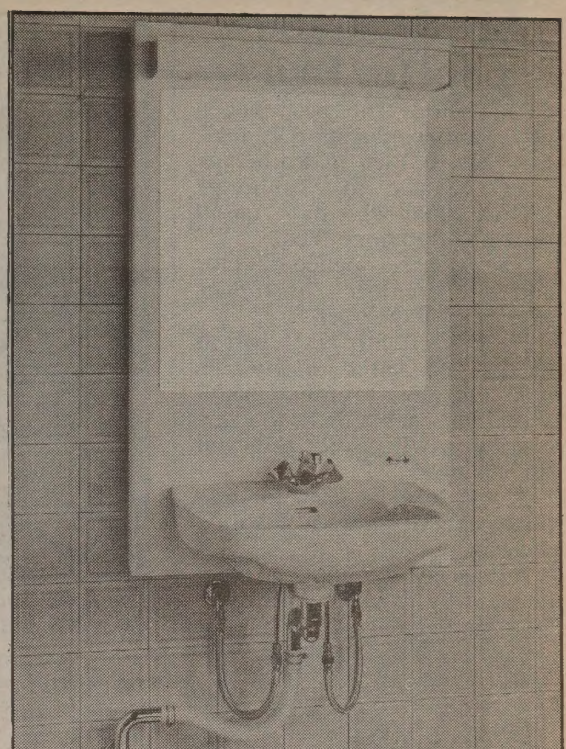
The Folda Frame (above) is light and very compact. Height can be adjusted. £45.62 (including VAT and postage). Available from 1 January 1986 from Folda Frame, PO Box 3, Zephon Common, Crookham Village, Aldershot GU13 0TE. Tel: (0252) 850935.

The Helping Hand Trolley (top left) can act as a walking frame, a carrying trolley and a table. The tray can be removed and the height adjusted. £27.50 from Goldene Designs Ltd, 7c Moss Lane, Whitefield, Manchester M25 7QE. Tel: 061-796 9367.

The Adjustabed, model 55, is one of a range with choice of options for adjustable posture, variable sleeping height and choice of wheels, side rails and hoist. From £264 to £642 for base. Golden Plan Ltd, 14 Golden Square, London W1.

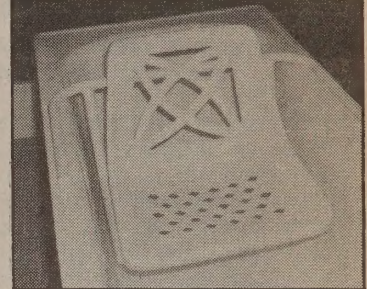


Alvema pushchairs come in 3 sizes for 1-10 year-olds, with grip rail, seat-belt, adjustable back position and foot rest. From £565 from Ortho-Kinetics Ltd, 190 Commercial Road, Totton, Southampton SO4 3ZZ. Tel: (0703) 863629.



The Lina wash basin unit is electrically powered with electronic touch controls which allow it to move smoothly up and down. There are similar units available for kitchen sinks and work tops. £800 from Nicholls and Clarke, Niclar House, 3-10 Shoreditch High Street, London E1 6PE. Tel: 01-247 5432.

Mike Stammers



Bath Seat RH/443 (above). This cheap aid should be useful for children and adults needing to sit in the bath with hips and knees bent for balance. £22.50 from SML Aids Ltd, Bath Place, High Street, Barnet, Herts EN5 5XE. The Saddle Chair (left) for cp children is easily adapted to suit the individual (as are the Plain Chair and Saddle Wheelchair). From £239 for basic chair. Annika, Unit 1, The Brook Trading Estate, Deadbrook Lane, Aldershot GU12 4XB.

## Let your Disabled Child ride a PONY

Unique, portable 3 wheeler (can be stowed in the boot of a car). Designed for the disabled child, but is fun for all children.

Here are a few super features:-

- Allows freedom and independence, indoors and out, enabling the child to move at a functional speed.
- Simple to operate and highly manoeuvrable, making it fun for the child.
- Compact and lightweight and strikingly attractive.
- 2 carefully proportioned sizes to cater for children from 4 upwards.
- Accessories available to meet child's needs.

**PONY - The vehicle that lets children be children.**

For a detailed colour brochure, fill in the coupon below.



Care Chair Division, ORTHO-KINETICS (UK) LIMITED  
190 Commercial Road, Totton, Southampton. SO4 3ZZ

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

D.N.85/110



## A hydrotherapy pool for Dene

Dene College, The Spastics Society's further education college, now has its own hydrotherapy pool, thanks to Tonbridge Round Table who have raised over £32,000 since IYDP.

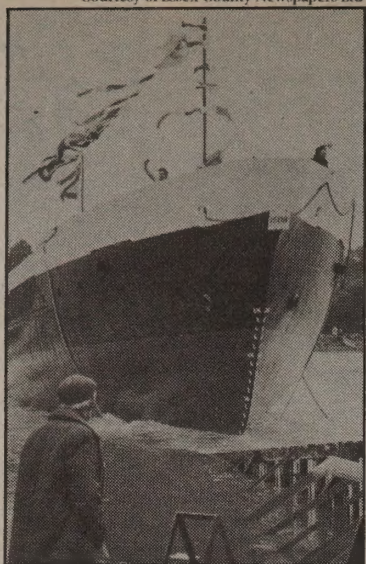
The pool was opened by actor and SOS member Christopher Beeny on 18 October.

"It will certainly play a part in making life better for students with the most profound handicaps, and enable them to exercise," says college vice-principal Peter Knight.

It will also be used for less handicapped students learning to swim.

A hoist for the pool has been donated by Brighton and Hove Bowling Club.

Courtesy of Essex County Newspapers Ltd



The Lord Nelson descends into the water at Wivenhoe.

## Lord Nelson sails again

The first sailing ship ever designed to be crewed by disabled people was launched near Colchester last month.

It cost £2 million, and is the largest vessel of its kind to have been built in Britain for 75 years.

Commissioned by the Jubilee Sailing Trust, the 400 ton barque will take 40 people on each 10-day voyage - half of them with disabilities. The idea of integrating disabled and able-bodied people by letting them share the challenge of the sea together has already proved highly successful over the last 3 years, when the Jubilee Sailing Trust has chartered the specially adapted brigantine Soren Larsen of Onedin Line fame.

Ann Grange, 18, a student with cerebral palsy, was one of the most severely disabled people to have sailed on the Soren Larsen.

"Everyone was doubtful if I would be able to participate as a crew member," she says. "But after I had completed tasks such as cleaning the heads (loos), mopping the floor, washing up on mess duty, doing look-out, coiling ropes and even steering the ship, people soon changed their minds about my capabilities."

*If you are interested in booking a berth on the Lord Nelson, contact the Jubilee Sailing Trust, Atlantic Road, Eastern Docks, Southampton SO1 1GD*

## VIEWPOINT

### Five issues that worry me

by Jim Woods

The first day seminar organised by residents of a Spastics Society centre for residents of other centres was held at Princess Marina Centre, Buckinghamshire, on 28 September. Its aim was to improve communication between residents and managers, and representatives from both sides spoke. Jim Woods, chairman of the Residents Council, gave his views.

The aims of this seminar are to bring to the Society's attention some of the problems which they have caused us during the last couple of years.

● Owing to unsatisfactory behaviour by some staff at one of its centres, the Society was panicked into making structural changes in its managerial staff. All centres are now subjected to a 2-tier management. For example, there are the managers' assistant managers. This in itself creates problems because, although it is good to have a lot of people around to help, we do not need to have so many people in charge.

Now of course I realise that the Society has to protect its interests and its employees, but the point I am trying to make is that they didn't consult the people they are supposed to be representing, ie the customers - US.

● A few months ago, a director of the Society appeared on TV implying that if the Society did not get its full quota of money from central government or local authorities it might have to think about cutting the Society's services. This would mean, in effect, turning people away or placing some residents in hospitals. People aren't going to like that. Now, imagine if you will, somebody living in a flat, under the Society's care, on their own, and watching that interview on the television. Just imagine their shock and fright.

● As Chairman of the Residents' Council at the Princess Marina I am a person with responsibility, making decisions on behalf of the residents. Like everything else, the job is not getting any easier. I think the Society should grant us a small wage for doing the job we do and also give us more training for the jobs we are supposed to carry out.

● People in residential centres are, to put it crudely, sex-starved. I have seen many examples at this centre. As well as the talking, which goes on far too much, there should be in every centre a person or persons paid by the Society to give the necessary assistance when wanted. I hear the Society has policies on this, but what the hell to policy. It's people we are dealing with. We are not bloody computers!

● My last point is to do with the pay structure. If the Society wants good, caring care staff, they should pay them a good wage. It should be more than they pay the activities officers because the care staff are paid to care and they get all the dirty jobs, eg cleaning up after people who have been sick, keeping people tidy, coping when people have tantrums - and they are not even allowed to raise a hand in their defence. Surely this job is worth more than they get?



## How can a possum help the severely handicapped?

There are many electrical appliances and attachments specially designed for the elderly or disabled.

They are described in a

leaflet called "Making Life Easier for the Disabled."

It's available, free of charge, simply by phoning 01-200 0 200, or completing

the coupon below.

Among other things, it will tell you about Patient Operated Selector Mechanisms (or POSSUMS for short).

ELECTRICITY COUNCIL, ENGLAND AND WALES.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of Making Life Easier for the Disabled. To: Electricity Publications, PO Box 2, Feltham, Middlesex TW14 0TG. Tel: 01-200 0 200.

**HELPELECTRIC**  
We have the power to help you.



## OUTLOOK

### Art

## Mouth and Foot Painting Artists Exhibition

Paul Driver sits straight in his wheelchair, one leg crossed over the other, a pencil gripped between the big toe and the second toe of his right foot. He concentrates on drawing two figures who are standing, perhaps, in a waiting room.

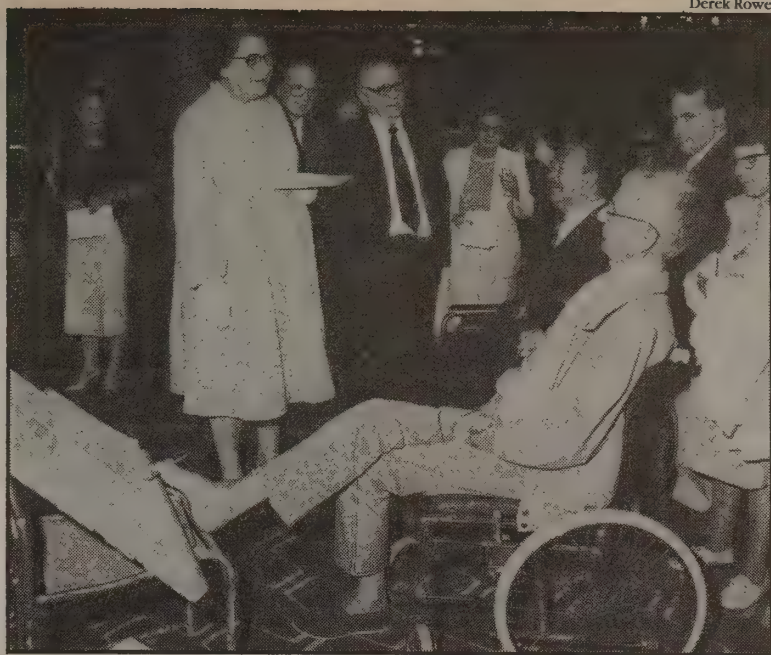
There is no eraser in sight. What, I wondered, does he do when he makes a mistake? He just keeps going. "You won't get anywhere if you are bothered by your mistakes," he says.

Paul contracted polio in 1955. Since then he has been drawing and painting, usually in oils and mainly landscapes or ships.

Several of his ships, with sails billowing in the wind, were on show at an exhibition organised by the Association of Mouth and Foot Painting Artists at the Royal Festival Hall, London, in September.

Forty-eight artists from 15 countries were represented, and nearly all the work, over 100 pieces, was for sale. Prices ranged from £25 to £550.

The upper foyer of the Royal Festival Hall seems a good place to hold an exhibition of this kind: there is a semi-captive audience



Paul Driver (right foreground) meets Baroness Trumpington at the opening of the exhibition. Peter Spencer, Secretary of the MFPA, stands beside her.

before and after performances, who are interested in the arts and have some money to spend.

The exhibition offered them a wide choice of subjects and styles. There were dancers, light and energetic, in pen and ink by Elizabeth Twistington Higgins; strong, impressionistic studies of woodlands and sea in water-colour or oils by Charles Fowler; an abstract Still Life with Pot in coloured pencils by Elof Lundberg.

There were flowers, animals, landscapes and portraits in oils, and some large, ambitious pictures, thickly coated with paint.

I particularly liked the work of

Professor Eric Stegmann, who founded the Association and died last year. His wood carving, Street in Bombay, was full of people; people lean, unsmiling, their eyes bright - with anger or hunger?

There were also two unusual and interesting contributions by the new president, Marlyse Tovae. Both were of reptiles - a mosaic of a lizard's head, with its red tongue, and two iguanas caught, time suspended, branded on wood. In quite different media she conveyed the feeling of "reptile".

As I looked at some of the pictures I wondered if these artists should be segregated into an exhibition of work by disabled people.

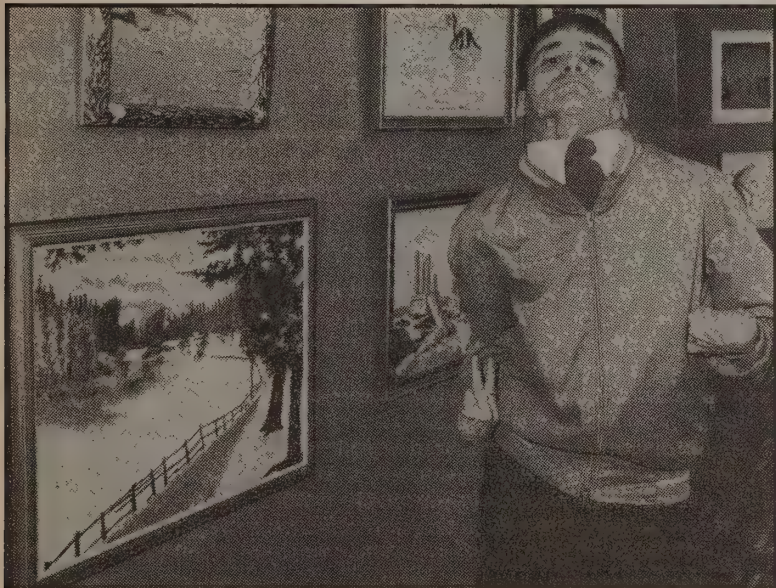
To some of the artists there it did not seem to matter much.

"I prefer to be in an able-bodied exhibition," said Paul Driver. "I've done so, but it doesn't really bother me."

For cp artist David Singleton, this kind of exhibition seemed a positive step. "If disabled people exhibit together, the public is more aware of what they can do," he said.

Mary Wilkinson

*If you are interested in becoming a member of the Association or buying Christmas cards, calendars or notelets designed by some of the artists, contact Mouth and Foot Painting Artists, 9 Inverness Place, London W2 3JF.*



David Singleton from Liverpool with his Snowscene in oils. (bottom left).

## Motoring

## The Explorer: custom-built but costly

Chair-Up, which produced the first car wheelchair lift and stowage system, and the High-Rider wheelchair, is now making pavement cars.

What is different about the new Explorer is that it comes in 3 versions: petrol, petrol/electric and electric.

All the versions are limited to 4 mph. But whereas the electric model has a limited range, the petrol models, powered by a Honda engine, with 1½ gallons in the tank and doing about 32 mpg, can go much further.

I like the petrol/electric car best because of its versatility. The extra electric power also helps on steep hills.

The Explorer is basically a fibreglass body on a welded steel chassis, with extras such as a body top, doors, cross-country tyres, a heater.

Two types of control are offered.

The tiller is easier than the joystick for someone who lacks full control of their hands. It is positioned in the centre of the driving panel so one can steer, accelerate or brake using both hands if necessary.

The joystick can be fitted anywhere but the actual control is very sensitive and is probably more suitable for those with weak hands.

All the other controls, such as indicators, are on a panel in front of the driver.

Getting in and out of the Explorer is quite simple: one just sits on the seat and swings one's legs in. The seat is the same height as a standard wheelchair and is comfortably upholstered.

I found the Explorer comfortable to drive, not bumpy, and easy to steer. It has a very good turning circle.

Chair-Up stresses that it makes only custom-made vehicles, so every one is built to individual requirements.

But of course the price is high. A basic car costs £1,850 and with roof and doors that becomes £2,360. This is out of reach of most disabled people and, if they could afford it, they would probably be looking for something a bit more mobile.

Bonnie Fleming

*Chair-Up Ltd, Building 75, Bournemouth Hurn Airport, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 6ED, tel: (0202) 579737 or 21305.*



Bonnie Fleming tries out the petrol/electric version.

John Byworth writes: Clive Sinclair has called in the receivers to sort out the production company of the C5 electrically-assisted tricycle. It is hoped that this move will ensure the future of the company and enable it to continue its research into a viable electric vehicle.

The C5 as reviewed in March's *Disability Now* was unsuitable for disabled people. We all hope that the new vehicle will be designed in such a way as to realise the potential of a huge market of people who require accessible, simple and economic transport.

## Books

### Computer Help for Disabled People

by Lorna Ridgway and Stuart McKears  
(A Condor Book. Souvenir Press, £8.95 hardback, £5.95 paperback.)

This is a super book. So often recently I have been critical of books and courses that I had begun to wonder if I was becoming jaded. It is therefore delightful to read a book that successfully meets an urgent need.

*Computer Help for Disabled People* provides information on computers for handicapped people, their parents, friends, and others interested in helping them. It is written in a simple, down-to-earth style.

One of the chapters is given over to questions and answers, but the tenor of most of the book is that of a knowledgeable friend who has dropped in at just the right moment to "fill you in" on what's happening with computers and what they might do to help you.

Part One of the book relates how computers have helped and added to the lives of people who have a variety of handicaps and come from various backgrounds.

Having demonstrated what has been possible for others, the book turns to the reader and starts to answer the questions handicapped people and those associated with them so often wish to ask... What is a computer and how does it work? What use is a computer? If I am disabled what is the best choice of

computer for me? Does the computer ever go wrong?

Subsequent chapters discuss hardware (the computer equipment), input devices (if you can't use the keyboard that all computers come with, all is not lost; there may be other devices which you can use which will make the computer work), software (the way of letting the computer know what it is you want to do today), communication (how computers can assist with this most frustrating handicap), where to go for information and help.

There is also a glossary so that when terms such as "crash", "bug", "boot", "handshake" are used - rarely if ever in this book, but by expert friends, other users or books - you can look them up and become familiar with their use in the computer context.

In the proof copy of the book which I have read there are a few factual errors in the information section, but in a field where information is changing so fast this is hard to avoid. I hope that they will be corrected in the published version.

Both authors work for the Leonard Cheshire Foundation on the COMPAID (Computer Aid for Speech Impaired and Disabled People) project.

It is their adult friends whom they had in mind while writing this book. However the style and content will make it a valuable read to anyone who wants to ask such questions as... Can computers do anything for me, my child, friend, loved one?

Janet Larcher  
Education Development Officer  
(Micro-electronics)

# Did you know...

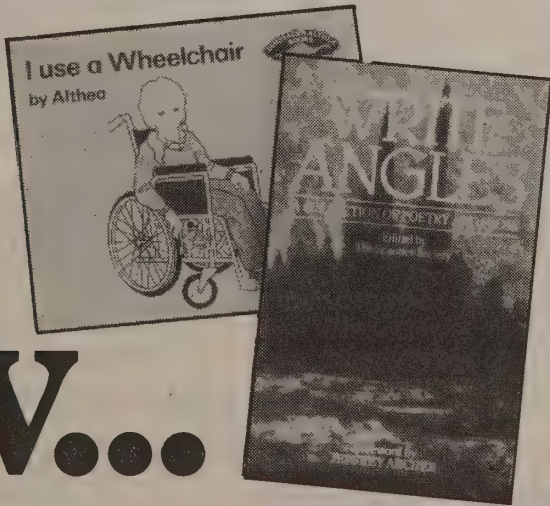
## ...that The Spastics Society's Library/Bookshop now has over 2000 books for sale and loan?

You can purchase or borrow a wide range of publications from the Society's Library/Bookshop. Topics include autobiography, antenatal care, therapies, feeding, play, education, sex and personal relationships. Some new titles are 'Helping Your Handicapped Child' by Janet Carr, Alyn Haskey's autobiography 'Freedom Ride', 'Treatment of Cerebral Palsy and Motor Delay' by Sophie Levitt and the new edition of the

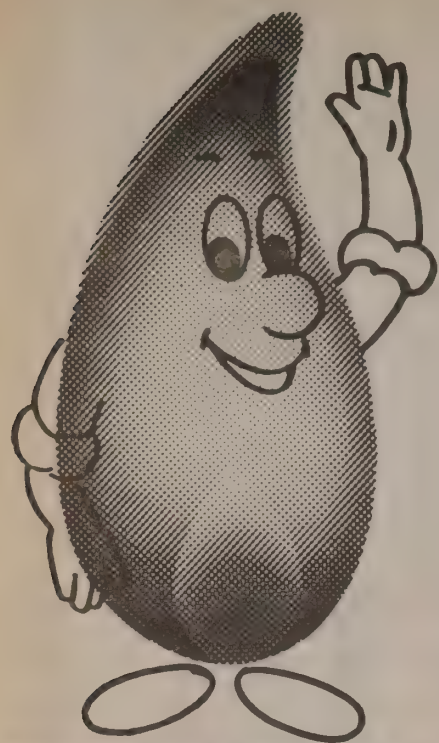
'Directory for Disabled People'.

With Christmas only a month or so away here are two books that would make excellent gifts: 'Write Angles', an attractive anthology of winning entries from the Literary Contest for People with Disabilities, and Althea's colourfully illustrated book 'I Use a Wheelchair' (price 0.95), an entertaining and thoughtful introduction to disability for young children.

An annotated list of titles is available on request from the Librarian,  
The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.







# "HELP FOR THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED."

The gas people offer a wide range of help to those who need it most, particularly the elderly and disabled.

If you are elderly or disabled, here are some of the ways in which we can make life easier for you. If you know somebody who might benefit from these services, please pass the information to them.

## FREE GAS SAFETY CHECKS

A free gas safety check on your gas appliances and installations is available if: *You are 65 or over and you live alone; You are a registered handicapped person of any age and you live alone.*

This free check includes any necessary adjustments as well as materials up to the cost of £2.50 (including VAT). You might have to pay for any additional work that needs to be done.

## SERVICING AND LEAKS

Gas fires, water heaters and central heating systems all need servicing from time to time. All customers can be assured that their appliances are operating safely and efficiently if they have them serviced regularly by competent people.

You should also bear in mind that checking and making safe a suspected escape, and simple gas escape repairs will usually be free. Why? Because we do not charge for the first 30 minutes of work, nor will we charge for parts and materials up to the value of £1 installed during that initial visit. If you suspect a gas leak at home or in the street, report it at once. The phone is quickest — call the emergency number for your area, under "GAS" in the local telephone directory.

## AIDS FOR THE DISABLED

Modern gas appliances are much easier for disabled people to use. Gas built-in ovens and hot-plates can be placed at a convenient height in the kitchen for people in wheelchairs or for people who find it difficult to bend down or reach up when they are cooking. Most new cookers and fires now have automatic spark ignition and need no matches to light them.

If you have a hand disability, you might find the controls on your cooker or gas fire difficult to operate.

British Gas has devised a range of special adaptors which should make life easier. There are four types of tap handles specially designed for cookers, each of which will fit many different models, and tap adaptors for many gas fires.

There is a nominal standard charge of £2 (plus VAT) per appliance for supplying and fitting adaptors to a new or existing appliance.

If you know someone who is blind or has failing sight, please tell them about braille controls for cookers and central heating. The clock controls which switch central heating on and off can be brailled. Special braille or studded controls are available for most gas cookers, together with a braille cooking chart.

## ASK US TO HELP YOU

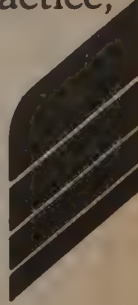
British Gas has a team of Home Service Advisers, who will call on disabled people at home and provide free advice on the use of gas. They can provide information about special adaptors and handles and advise on the choice of suitable appliances.

If you would like to contact the Home Service Advisers or to enquire about free gas safety checks, regular servicing for appliances or aids for the disabled, visit your local gas showroom or telephone the gas service centre (the phone number is under "GAS" in the local directory).

## PAYING FOR GAS

The showroom can also tell you about easier ways to pay your gas bills, and how to get help if there is real hardship — ask for the Code of Practice, "Electricity and gas bills for your home."

**BRITISH GAS**



**HELPFUEL SERVICES FROM THE GAS PEOPLE.**



Stockport Express/Advertiser



**A toast for the Duke.** The Duke Of Westminster, President of The Spastics Society, stops to chat to Claire Bramwell at the official opening of Cheddle Lodge, Stockport, on 3 October. Stockport, East Cheshire and High Peak Spastics Society's new long-stay, short-stay and respite development is for 12 people with disabilities. Next to the Duke is Rosemary Pugh, Chairman of the Stockport group. 200 attended, including the Mayor and Mayoress of Stockport.

At some stage every year, most affiliated groups buckle down to the tortuous task of producing a year book.

Up to now, the efforts many groups make has gone largely unrecognised.

But at this year's Annual General Meeting on 2 November, The Spastics Society is launching a new competition to find the best local group year book in the country.

First prize is an electric typewriter worth £250, second prize is a week's holiday for a disabled person and helper at Churchtown Farm Field Studies Centre, and third prize is goods to the value of £100 from The Spastics Society's Christmas Catalogue.

The idea for the competition came from John Byworth, Chairman of the North London Spastics Association, when he finally finished putting together his group's yearbook at the end of last year.

"While resting on my laurels -

## Is your yearbook worthy of acclaim?

Simon Crompton



## REPORTS

*Continued from page 6*

it aims to teach disabled people such skills as photography and to encourage them to stand on their own feet. But what happens after the course, some people wonder.

We heard of a volunteer scheme for cp people to help in voluntary organisations which is in danger of being wound up. Surely it should receive adequate support from the groups and regions as it provides valuable work for disabled people with time on their hands and gives them the satisfaction of helping someone else?

In the discussion group on provision for the more profoundly handicapped, it was felt that The Spastics Society had only scratched the surface of the problem and that more time and resources should be devoted to finding a lasting answer.

The group discussing "living options" saw independence as freedom to make decisions and not just physical independence which may be limited. Decisions should include major ones such as how and where they would like to live.

The group thought that the Centre for Independent Living in Southampton and others should receive more financial support from the regions. Disabled people would then not need so

much support from statutory and voluntary bodies in the shape of total care. This does not mean that the pressure on statutory authorities to provide services should be relaxed, however.

There was a lot of support for the aims and ideals of the national and regional Alpha Committees which would enable cp people to have a say in running the Society.

It was good to hear of successful activities in the region, and encouraging for others, but we must not allow ourselves to become complacent.

**Richard Gamble**

*The next meeting of the S.E. Alpha Group will be on 7 December, at the Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre. Details from S.E. regional office, tel: (07372) 41251.*

### Did you have a good holiday?

If you had a good holiday - or an awful experience you want to warn others about - please let us know, in not more than 400 words, with photos if possible. We are preparing the annual holiday feature for the January issue.

The deadline for contributions is 29 November. Send them to Mary Wilkinson, *Disability Now*, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

## LOCAL GROUP NEWS

Edited by Simon Crompton

### Duchess opens new wing at Scalesceugh

When, in 1976, a resident of Scalesceugh Hall in Cumbria had to be moved into hospital because facilities were not sufficient to cater for his deteriorating condition, a group of local businessmen started an appeal so that the same thing would never happen again.

The result of their fundraising is a £100,000 extension to Cumbria Spastics Society's long-stay residential home, a purpose-built unit for 5 residents with a lounge, kitchen, large bedrooms and closomat toilets.

The Duchess of Gloucester came to Scalesceugh on 16 October, to officially open the unit and to meet the residents.



Tony Wiseman, Central Studio

*The Duchess of Gloucester meets some residents and day attenders in the grounds at Scalesceugh. From left to right: Winifred Little (foreground), Brenda Holmes, Jack Scurr, The Duchess of Gloucester, Wing Commander Bob Golightly (Chairman of the Cumbria group) and Arthur Armer (warden).*

well, an armchair actually - I thought it would be nice to compare my efforts with others around the country," he said.

Anita Maunsell, Head of Publicity and Information at The Spastics Society, was taken with the idea.

"Local group year books provide important information about our aims and work at local and national levels," she said. "So the greater the quality of these books, the greater will be the benefit to the Society as a whole."

"We're looking for an imaginative use of the information being presented - one which communicates usefully to the general public."

The judges will also be looking for an editorial approach which corresponds to modern attitudes to disability.

*For application forms, please write to Anita Maunsell, Head of Publicity and Information, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.*

### Wheelchair push and walk overcomes the competition

The Thamesdown and District Spastics Association's fifth annual sponsored walk and wheelchair push attracted more people than ever before - despite competition from a CND rally and the Swindon People's Marathon.

The walk, which raised around £5,000, started and



*Walkers and pushers set off outside RAF Fairford.*

finished at the United States Air Force Base at RAF Fairford, Gloucestershire on 22 September.

Usually, personnel from the base help push the people in wheelchairs around the 10-mile course which winds through the countryside and the villages of Kempsford, Dunfield and Castle Eaton.

But because of a large presence of Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament supporters at the perimeter of the base, the Americans kept a low profile.

"All the same, the walk was very, very successful," says Tony Long, event organiser and Chairman of the Thamesdown group. "We had the best weather we've ever had and everyone enjoyed it."

Fifty people in wheelchairs and 250 others took part. Everyone completed the course, and 3 people in wheelchairs did so totally unaided in under 2 hours.

Participants came from as far afield as Bolton, Salisbury and Taunton. The National Star Centre in Cheltenham sent a busload of young people along, and a troupe of majorettes set a lively rhythm for the hikers on the walk's first couple of miles.

Money was raised through individual sponsorship. Forty local businesses also sponsored wheelchairs - for £25 they had their placard fixed to the chair.

### Ilford group hail a Happy Cab

Malcolm Cleaves, Taxi Globe



*At the presentation of the "Happy Cab", from left to right: Brian Conroy of UK Taxi Services, Mike Rose of Cabsurance, Vivian Bendall MP, Harry Fell (Chairman of the Ilford group) and Bernie Joel of UK Taxi Services.*

Ilford, Romford and District Spastics Association have been given their very own taxi cab, thanks to their local MP.

The "Happy Cab" was presented to the group in Battersea Park on 2 September.

UK Taxi Services donate several taxis a year to charities which are chosen by the Joint London Taxi Driver of the Year Society.

Ilford North MP Vivian Bendall, Patron of the Ilford Spastics Association, was asked

if he knew of a worthy cause.

"I said 'Good Heavens, yes! I've got just the one,' he said. 'I know it will be put to marvellous use by the group.'"

The Happy Cab will be used to supplement the group's 15-seater minibus, which has grown too small to take all its members on outings and to their club.

The Ilford group won't even have to go to the expense of insuring the new vehicle - a company called Cabsurance have done that already.



# Share Your Problems

With Margaret Morgan

**I have been underestimated all my life – could I become a singer with a group?**

The problem shared in the August issue of my column about children and adults who have difficulties with visual perception and visual motor skills has triggered off a dialogue with others who feel that they too have been underestimated because of their particular disabilities.

From my contact with people with cerebral palsy I know that quite a large percentage consider that their talents and skills have been unrecognised or undervalued. This is particularly evident in the field of employment. Many cp people have either been unable to get a job at all or are doing less responsible work than they feel they could do.

I am sure that there is a great deal of truth in many of these assertions and that having to fight to prove oneself is a much more arduous and long-term

problem for those who have obvious disabilities.

On the other hand, a disability can create a *real* handicap which does affect one's potential capacity to cope with a particular job or to qualify for promotion.

Employers are often not as open and frank as they might be, and many people with disabilities are left feeling angry and frustrated because no one has explained exactly why it is considered that they cannot do the particular job for which they have applied.

If the employer *had* explained, it might well have been possible to look at the requirements again and reconsider the position. Alternatively, the disabled applicant might have decided that he or she could not manage that job anyway.

The following letter expresses vividly the frustration of a middle-aged man with cerebral palsy who feels that he has to fight for recognition in so many areas of his life and that, even now, he has talents which others do not take seriously.

**"After reading your August column I felt I must write to you to see if you can put me in touch with the right people who could help me to achieve my one goal in life. This is to be assessed to see if it is possible for me to become a singer with a group."**



Simon Crompton

**I am forty years old and a life-long fan of Elvis.**

**Is there a recording studio in my area that might help me?**

**I feel that all through my life I have been underestimated. I have had to fight to make people see that I could train dogs, which I have now been doing for quite a number of years. I have had to fight to obtain a driving licence. I passed my driving test 18 months ago at the second attempt.**

**I do feel very strongly that disabled people should not have to fight to get recognised for what they feel sure they can do as well as anyone else. It is most disheartening and depressing at times."**

I am glad that you have written to me and I know that there are many other people like you with cerebral palsy – and with other problems as well – who feel that their potential has never been fully recognised. This also applies to quite a large proportion of the ordinary population, who have not had opportunities to use their skills and talents fully.

It does seem, however, that you have achieved considerable success with your dog training and driving, though I realise that you had to fight to prove that you have skills that other people take for granted. This must have been very frustrating and difficult for you and I hope that the time will come when we will all be able to look beyond the external differences to a person's real abilities.

I am not sure about being a pop singer, though!

I imagine that many thousands of young people have ambitions to join a group and to make a record that will appear in the charts. Only an extremely small percentage of these young hopefuls make it to the top and, even then, their popularity may be very short-lived.

There are, of course, some very well-known and talented musicians who have physical disabilities – Ian Dury on the pop scene, and on the classical side Itzhak Perlman the brilliant Israeli violinist. Jeffrey Tate, who has spina bifida, is steadily gaining fame as a conductor, in spite of needing to conduct his orchestra sitting.

Everyone needs a lucky break, though, and I wonder if you have tried singing in a local talent competition? Or in a pub?

How about taping some of your songs and playing them over to see how others react? I expect you would be able to find someone locally who would accompany you on a guitar or piano. Or you could "sing over" another taped song or pop record for practice.

This really is an immensely competitive field, you know, and even if you can't become a pop star, you could perhaps sing pop songs. Many people are disappointed at not being able to get into the world of entertainment, even after they have fought hard to demonstrate their talents. Good luck with your endeavours all the same!

# What's On

## Courses at Castle Priory

**Personal and Social Development: Young People with Special Needs** – a practical programme for teachers, care staff, therapists and volunteers working with adolescent groups. 25-27 November. Tuition £43, residence £37.

**The Basic Motor Pattern** – a course for those planning treatment or developing skills with children who have cerebral palsy. The tutor is Ester Cotton 6-8 December. Tuition £43, residence £37.

**Hyperactivity in Children** – a multi-disciplinary course which will discuss the broad range of approaches to management of the condition in current practice. 9-11 December. Tuition £43, residence £37.

For more information about any of these courses write to Castle Priory College, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 0HE.

## Conferences and leisure

**An Over-View of A.I.D.S. and Counselling** is a seminar being held by SPOD (The Association to Aid the Sexual and Personal Relationships of People with a Disability) on 14 November at 5.30 pm at 286 Camden Road, London N7 0BJ. The speaker is David Miller, a clinical psychologist at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington. For further information contact SPOD on 01-607 8851.

**From Patients to People** is the title of MIND's annual conference on 28-29 November at Kensington Town Hall, London W8. The fee is £20 for one day or £40 for both. Further information from the National Association for Mental Health, 22 Harley Street, London W1N 2ED.

**Where are we going** – the 25th birthday conference of AIMS (The Association for Improvement in the Maternity Services) – is being held on 29 November. Speakers include Wendy Savage, Senior Lecturer in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at The London Hospital Medical College, who will discuss 'Can you change the maternity services?' and Sally Willington, the founder and president of AIMS talking on the history of the organisation. Tickets cost £10 (£7 for AIMS members). Further details from AIMS, c/o Leslie Batchelor, 67 Lennard Road, London SE20 7LY. (Please enclose s.a.e.).

**Informal music-making sessions** are being held on 29 November and 13 December from 2pm until 4pm at the College of Adult Education, Cavendish Street, All Saints, Manchester M15 6BP. They are open to both adults and children, disabled or able-bodied, and for both musicians and people new to music-making. For further details contact Roger Wilkes, Staff Tutor in Music at the above address. Tel: 061-273 5335. (He can also offer help with transport.)

**The Disability Alliance Educational and Research Association** is holding a series of training courses at The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1. These include "Attendance and Mobility Allowance" on 29 November, "Severe Disablement Allowance" on 6 December, and "The Industrial Injuries Scheme" on 13 December. The fee is £30 per course, with some reduced fee places for under-funded voluntary organisations. For further details contact Anna Rowe, Training Assistant, Disability Alliance, 25 Denmark Street, London WC2.

**Leeds conference for young disabled people.** As part of International Youth Year Leeds City Council is holding a conference on Saturday 7 December for people aged between 15 and 25 at the new Jacob Kramer College building, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds. It includes talks, workshops dealing with education, employment, housing and recreation. There will be a loop system and a sign language expert for the hard of hearing. For further details contact Cathy Walsh, Equal Opportunities Unit, Leeds City Council, Civic Hall, Leeds LS1 1VR.

**Technology in Special Education – And Later** is a course being held on Saturday 7 December at Park School, Bierton Road, Aylesbury, Bucks. It will cover a broad range of technical aids, equipment and techniques developed for disabled people, with a small exhibition of aids, including microcomputers. Fees: £9 for families, £7 for professionals, £6 for voluntary workers, students, disabled people, relatives, and £5 for ACTIVE members. Further information from Phil Ross, at Park School. Tel: (0296) 23507.

**A drama weekend** is being held by the North London Spastics Association on the 7-8 December at The Hornsey Centre for Handicapped Children, 26a Dukes Avenue, Muswell Hill, London N10. This is a chance to be shown a few acting skills by professional actors – come as you are, and be who you would like to be. On the Saturday evening there will be a trip to see a London show. For further details contact Ruth Cottrell, The Spastics Society, London Region, 32-38 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND. Tel: 01-387 5505.

## CLASSIFIED

### For Sale

**BBC 40 HORIZON KERB CLIMBER ELECTRIC WHEELCHAIR** with weatherproof cape. Unused. £1,000. Tel: 021-422 8391

**MEYRA 422 WHEELCHAIR.** Powered steering motor on rear castor wheel. Control lever is used for steering, speed control and braking. £250. Contact Mr R Church, Milton Keynes Community Care Service, 8 Barbers Mews, Neath Hill, Milton Keynes, Bucks MK14 6HS. Tel: (0908) 661122

**BATRICAR.** Vgc. Spare wheel, new batteries. Kept Rye, Sussex. £650. Tel: (0797) 8367.

**GIMSON STAIRLIFT.** All parts apart from stair track. Hardly used; in perfect

working order. £350 or nearest offer. Tel: (0742) 682483

### Find a friend

**IS THERE A FELLOW BIRD WATCHER** in the Colchester area with transport who would be interested in taking a disabled companion birdwatching or would visit me to discuss wild birds and the countryside? Please contact Miss Godfrey, Wakes Hall Centre, Wakes Colne, Colchester, Essex. Tel: (07875) 2044

### Jobs

**LIVE-IN CARE ATTENDANT** needed by young middle-aged disabled couple. Husband has Motor Neurone Disease and is severely disabled. Good wage plus board and lodging. Two days off in the week. Non-smoker and driver preferred. Please write with reference to Mrs R Stead, 25 Deal Street, Northampton NN1 3HS.

## POLICIES FOR PEOPLE A CHALLENGE FOR PERSONNEL

Manchester City Council is pledged to enhancing its personnel services and to developing creative employment policies which will bring the maximum benefit and opportunities to all groups of workers. To help achieve these aims, the Personnel Department is moving towards integrating the skills of its O & M, Work Study and Employee Review Groups into a combined Management Services Division and to co-ordinate this work with the Department's Central Training and Industrial Relations services.

### PROJECT LEADER – MANAGEMENT SERVICES

SO1/2 £9975/£11604 – 2 POSTS (1 NEW)

### MANAGEMENT SERVICES OFFICER

Scale 4/6 £6555/£9114

This is an ideal opportunity for either Work Study, Organisation and Methods, Personnel or Systems professionals to contribute his or her experience at the start and to develop further skills across a broad range of techniques and applications. Planned main work programmes will ensure that the various skills of the former individual disciplines are applied simultaneously to the individual Department or project reviews, towards the achievement of a systematic review of systems and organisation structure in the Authority utilising the very latest applications of technology.

### INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS OFFICER

SO1/2 £9975/£11604 – (NEW POST)

This is a new post which will strengthen a busy team whose responsibilities cover a comprehensive range of industrial relations matters. These include the rates of pay and conditions of service, both national and local, of all employees of the Authority (except Teachers), consultation and negotiation with Trade Unions and the servicing of the Council's Central Joint Consultative Committees and relevant Appeals Sub-Committees.

### TRAINING OFFICER

SO1/2 £9975/£11604 – (NEW POST)

This new postholder will join a group of Trainers developing new and innovative training and career development opportunities for Council Workers. The accent in the group is very much on teamwork and you will need to demonstrate the ability to play an active role in identifying and implementing training initiatives for both manual and non-manual workers. You will also need to contribute positively to training in support of the Council's Equal Opportunities and Anti-Racist policies.

All new posts are available for Job Share.

For a Job Description and an Application Form for any of these posts, please apply to The Director of Personnel, 4th Floor, Cumberland House, Crown Square, Manchester, M60 3BB, or ring 061 234 7520. Closing Date 22 November, 1985.

The City Council operates a Union Membership Agreement, under which a new employee is required to become a member of a recognised Trade Union.

**MANCHESTER City Council**

Defending Jobs - Improving Services

Manchester City Council is an Equal Opportunity Employer, and we positively welcome applications from racial, ethnic or national origin, disability, age up to 65, sexuality or responsibilities for dependants.



## PEOPLE

### Alpha: the third man

Alan Kerwin starts as the third development and research officer of the Alpha Advisory Committee in November. He is responsible for the South of England and London.

Working from the South East Regional office in Reigate, he will be encouraging people to set up regional and local alpha groups, liaise with the national committee, and therefore help make Alpha more representative of disabled people as a whole.

Aged 37, Alan worked at The Spastics Society's Sully Works for several years. Since February this year he has been working as an Information Officer at the Socie-

ty's regional office in Cardiff.

"I'm in a wheelchair, but I don't consider myself to be disabled - it's a normal lifestyle to me," he says.

"Disabled people are unique as a minority because they have no recourse to the law if they are discriminated against. That's why it's essential to have something like Alpha, to get our views across and show people that we have a right to exist as well."

Alan's main interests are employment, housing and rights generally.

"I'd like to see disabled people take more control over their own lives," he says.

## Goodbye Mr Showbusiness

Dickie Henderson died on 22 September and so the Stars Organisation for Spastics lost one of its most loved and admired members.

Dickie was one of Britain's most successful entertainers and to many in the profession he was Mr Showbusiness. He appeared in no fewer than 8 Royal Variety Performances.

He devoted a great deal of time to charity and many years ago was instrumental in bringing together the Variety Club of Great Britain and the SOS which have worked together on many successful occasions.

He travelled to many parts of the world on fund raising mis-

sions and he was one of the founders of the Variety Club Sunshine Coach scheme.

He was a past chairman, and until his death, a vice president of the SOS.

Dickie Henderson was the inspiration behind many golf tournaments and in particular he was very involved in the Cyanamid Agrochem tournament at The Belfry.

Although gravely ill, he continued to help with this year's tournament. He asked Richie Benaud, a close friend, to host the event in his absence and Leslie Crowther to do the cabaret for the dinner. The event was a resounding success and raised £10,000 for the SOS.

Nothing was too much trouble for Dickie Henderson. He often rejected professional engagements to appear at a charity event.

A considerable after dinner speaker, whose sense of humour was legendary, he was in constant demand and his friendship was sought and cherished.

Dickie was the ultimate professional and humanitarian; the loss is like losing a member of the family. He was a dear friend who will be very sadly missed.

Sheila Rawstorne



Dickie adds the finishing touches to a painting with Ian Root, on a visit to Wakes Hall.

## New TSS Committee Members

Several new members have been appointed to serve on Society committees.

**William Wallace**, Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at The University of Nottingham Medical School, **Dr Malcolm Levene**, Senior Lecturer in Child Health at the University of Leicester School of Medicine and **Martin Bobrow**, Prince Philip Professor of Paediatric Research at Guy's Hospital Medical School have become members of the Medical

Advisory Committee.

**Peter Mittler**, Professor of Special Education at the University of Manchester and **Christine Markham**, who has a child with cp and who has contributed to special education courses at Exeter University, have been appointed to the Educational Advisory Committee.

The Finance Committee has appointed **Professor Dean Berry** of the London Business School.

people benefited. The closing date for applications this year is 28 November, 1985. For further information contact Sylvia Simmons, COMET Scheme Coordinator, c/o National Bureau for Handicapped Students, 336 Brixton Road, London SW9 7AA. Tel: 01-274 0565.

**New educational guides** from the Department of Education and Science. *Higher Education - finding your way*, by David Dixon, is a booklet looking at the options available to prospective students. It gives advice on deciding whether higher education is for you, choosing institutions and courses, applying, finance, and career prospects after qualification. Price 95p (or

## Campbell's makes charitable offer

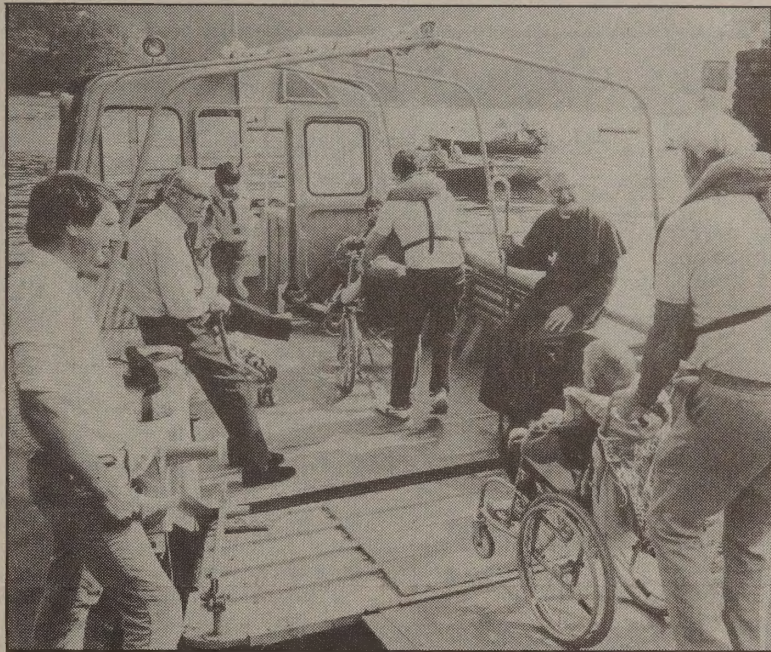
Collect the special Campbell's Soup Souphero labels and help The Spastics Society.

For every 6 Souphero labels you collect Campbell's will award £1 to your chosen organisation or individual - up to £1 million in total. Why not choose The Spastics Society and aid its regional fund?

Just send the labels you collect to Peter McCabe, Regions Fund Raising Manager, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.



**Starry night.** The Duke and Duchess of Westminster (centre) attended a special charity ball at Hoghton Tower near Preston last month, which raised at least £2,500 for The Spastics Society's Beech Tree School (North) Appeal. Compere for an evening of dancing, dining and entertainment was comedian Les Dawson (right). Lynne Perrie (left), Ivy Tilsley of Coronation Street and President of the Beech Tree (North) Appeal, was also there. Bob Christie, Appeal Director, stands by her. The ball was organised by a group of local businessmen.



Some disabled children try out "The Spirit of Cornwall" at the launch. The descending tailgate can be seen in the foreground. On the left are Chris Shields (Bosun at Churchtown), and Robert Lyle. On the right the Bishop of Truro greets boarders.

## £24,000 boat for Churchtown

Thanks to a specially modified boat, all visitors to Churchtown Farm Field Studies Centre in Cornwall will now be able to experience the joys of messing around in boats - no matter how disabled they are.

"The Spirit of Cornwall" was launched at Fowey on 26 September by Robert Lyle, ex-High Sheriff of Cornwall and Chairman of the Trustees of the appeal for Churchtown Farm.

Mrs Joyce Smith, Chairman of The Spastics Society, hosted the ceremony and His Grace the Bishop of Truro was there to bless the craft.

The £24,000 project, funded by organisations and individuals in Cornwall, has taken 2 years to complete. Churchtown Farm carried out their own adaptations to the 8 metre sea truck, giving it a tailgate for wheelchair access at the stern.

## Ian goes on a flyer

Ian Root, one of the seven disabled competitors in the Windsor Great Park Half Marathon, went on an unexpected short cut through the air and ended up in hospital.

Using a prototype chair, Ian, from The Spastics Society's Wakes Hall, hit a pothole as he was travelling downhill at 30 mph, parted company with his chair, and ended up badly scraped with a broken finger. Fortunately he was only in hospital for a day.

For the first time this year there were 2 classes of disabled race - for people with cerebral palsy and for paraplegics.



Cp competitors, 1 to r, Alex Takyi, winner Matthew Finken (both from Meldreth), Ian Root (Wakes Hall), Brendon Carroll (Drummonds).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**The Spastics Society's latest poster** in the series on attitudes can be found inserted in this issue of *Disability Now*. It is currently to be seen on sites throughout the London Underground and will be displayed nationally in 1986. If you would like more copies contact the Information Department, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Tel: 01-636 5020, ext 202.

**Do you need a computer?** COMET (Concerned Micros in Education and Training) can help young disabled people who need their own micro-computing equipment for further education, training or work experience. Last year 12 young

£10 for 25 copies) from HMSO bookshops and through book-sellers. *Soon be 16* is a wallchart outlining options available to 16 year-olds in education. It is available from the Publications Despatch Centre, DES, Government Buildings, Honeypt Lane, Stanmore, Middx HA7 1AZ.

**Two New Publications.** *Openings* is a quarterly magazine produced by disabled people for disabled people. It aims to attempt to change people's attitudes towards disabled people and the problems of disability and will include information on organisations and equipment and stories of people who have overcome their disabilities. *Openings* will be distributed through libraries, hospitals, day centres, voluntary and state services and other relevant professionals. *Opportuni-*

*ties for the Disabled*, 3rd Floor, Pegasus House, 17 Burleys Way, Leicester LE1 3BE. *This caring Business* is a quarterly magazine concerned with the commercial considerations of health and welfare care in the private and voluntary sectors. It covers such areas as finance, property, staff training, relevant legislation and professional, public and trade bodies. Circulation is to those in the independent sector such as private hospitals and clinics, residential nursing homes, specialist builders, private investors, and also health authority buyers. *This Caring Business*, 70 Lower Park Road, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 2LD. Tel: (0424) 426906.

**Christmas facilities for elderly and disabled patients** whose friends and families are unable to be with them over

Christmas are being offered to doctors and charities by the Churchill Clinic in London. A special daily rate from 24 December to 2 January 1986, or on any day during that period is £75 inclusive. Contact the Churchill Clinic, 80 Lambeth Road, London SE1 7PW. Tel: 01-928 5633.

**Threshold Travel's 1986 brochure** is now available and includes many new holiday destinations for disabled people, such as a motoring holiday in Canada, a Kenya wildlife safari, the Kielder Holiday Centre and scuba diving or deep-sea fishing holidays in the Red Sea. Also more relaxing holidays! For a copy of the brochure contact Threshold Travel Ltd, Wrendal House, 2 Whitworth Street West, Manchester M1 5WX. Tel: 061-236 9763.



## Revolution in reading for blind people

Kathy Johnson



Lin Berwick tries the new machine at Westminster.

### Kathy Johnson reports

A unique reading machine for visually handicapped people should soon be installed in a City of Westminster library.

The Kurzweil Reading Machine, which was developed over 15 years in the United States, reads text with the aid of a camera and converts it into speech, an audio tape or Braille.

At a demonstration of the machine last month at Westminster City Hall, Lin Berwick went along to try it out.

"It's absolutely superb," she said. "The way it can open the printed word to the blind is marvellous. Effectively, blindness in terms of printed material has ceased to be a disability."

The reading machine is straightforward to operate. It takes only about 15 minutes to get used to the controls, which are on a small keypad. The synthetic speech is remarkably clear – in an American accent!

The prohibitive factor is the price of £25,000 and the annual maintenance insurance of £2,500.

The machine for Westminster libraries will be purchased with the proceeds from a Royal Gala performance of Orpheus in the Underworld at the London Coliseum on 2 December in the presence of HRH Princess Alexandra. The event is being sponsored by Chemical Bank.

At the moment there are only 12 Kurzweil Reading Machines in the UK, 3 of them in Manchester libraries, and none in the south.

"For me to travel 22 miles to read a letter is beyond a joke," said Lin Berwick. "£25,000 is peanuts for a council. If there was one in each borough it would give the blind what the sighted take for granted."

## Discrimination is on the way to being screened out

It seems likely that the draft Cinema Safety Regulations (1985) and the accompanying guidelines will be amended in the light of criticism from organisations representing disabled people.

This was the gist of a Home Office written answer on the 24 October to a question put by Jack Ashley MP, chairman of the Commons All Party Disablement Group, and John Hannam MP, its secretary. It was confirmed by a Home Office spokesman.

Several organisations, including The Spastics Society, have protested that they were not consulted.

They say that the guidelines set down for licensing authorities and cinema managers discriminate against disabled people. For example, wheelchair users in an auditorium should be accompanied by an able-bodied person and they should be confined to the ground floor;

blind people should only be admitted if accompanied by a sighted person; and "the cinema environment is not suitable for guide dogs".

The Department of the Environment is also concerned that the cinema regulations do not complement the new building regulations which require access for disabled people to new buildings.

The Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, has argued that the regulations aim to protect the safety of all persons using cinemas and that the guidelines do give positive encouragement for the admission of disabled people.

But the All Party Disablement Group is not convinced. It will be discussing the matter on 12 November and seeking a meeting with the Minister.

"Obviously we are very concerned", said John Hannam, "and we are totally opposed to the Home Office line."

## 101 companies show the way

One hundred and one companies, from the British Steel Corporation to Grampian Country Chickens, have had their achievements in employing disabled people recognised.

The Manpower Services Commission announced its annual Fit for Work awards last month. The awards are part of a 6-year old MSC campaign to make employers more aware of the potential of disabled workers.

British Aerospace, Salmesbury, one of the winners, employs 3,050 people – 10 per cent of them are disabled. It is company policy to restructure jobs or retrain if an employee cannot continue his or her usual work because of illness or injury.

At the other end of the scale is Dorron Roller Ltd, Bury, which employs only 36 people, 20 per cent of whom have a disability.

"A firm the size of ours simply cannot afford to carry dead weight," said Dorron Roller's factory manager, Mr A Tinker. "We are not running a charity and everyone we take on has to be capable of doing the job."

Laura Ashley Ltd in Oswestry, has made many adaptations to make its work premises more accessible to disabled people. These include a zip measuring jig for a worker with cerebral palsy and a ramp with protective rails which can take the wheel-

chair of an employee with polio. ★ Information technology is a double-edged sword for young disabled people seeking employment, says a new report.

Although IT has helped some employers redesign jobs so that disabled people can perform them, it is likely that the long-term impact will be to reduce jobs, the report says.

It is possible to redistribute jobs so that disabled people are less disadvantaged in the labour market, says the writer, Amin Rajan, Research Fellow at the Institute of Manpower Studies, University of Sussex.

"But this requires a two-pronged approach – one that raises social awareness of the job discrimination suffered by the disabled, and one that attempts to change social perceptions of a "job" by paying a social wage for worthwhile occupations outside the economically oriented labour market." The report highlights several cases of "good practice" among 5 employers operating outside the public sector and offering "open" competitive employment.

Information Technology and Disabled Young Workers – *IMS Report No. 103*, is available from the *IMS, Mantell Building, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9RF*.

## £5m for London dial-a-rides

London Regional Transport is taking over responsibility for funding dial-a-rides in London once the GLC disappears next year.

Mrs Lynda Chalker, the transport minister, has authorised LRT to spend £5 million in 1986/7 on providing this service to disabled people who cannot use public transport.

At present there are 30 local dial-a-ride offices, nearly 100 specially adapted dial-a-ride buses and over 20,000 registered users.

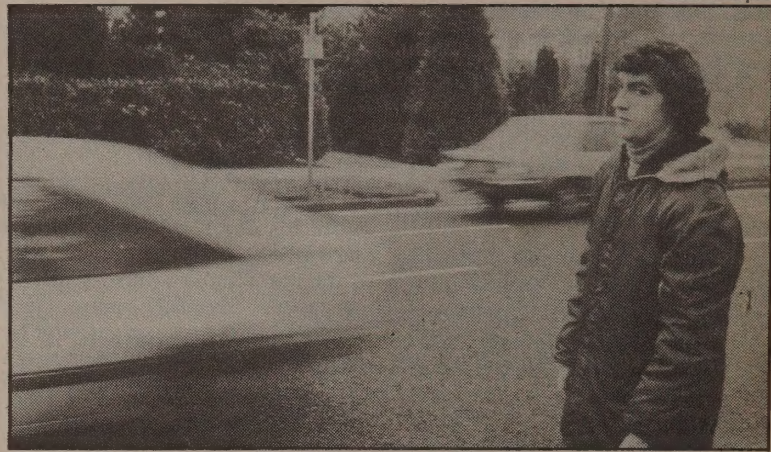
The Federation of London Dial-a-Rides (FoLdAR) welcomed the decision.

"For some time we have been calling on the government to recognise that we have the same right to public transport as everyone else in London," said FoLdAR chairman, Alan Walker. "The acceptance of this principle marks an important milestone for people with disabilities."

"An important precedent has been set", said John Cox, director of The Spastics Society. "We hope the government will go on to allocate funds for other dial-a-rides and to start new ones. They are a lifeline for disabled people."

## Road threat to disabled people

Simon Crompton



Brian Richardson waiting to cross the Meadway.

A disabled man has handed in a petition with a thousand signatures to his local MP because of a "death trap" road.

26 year-old Brian Richardson is fighting for a zebra crossing on a stretch of the Meadway in Reading near his home and adjacent to a sheltered housing area for old people.

"One day I was waiting for half an hour to cross," he says. "Just four months ago I saw someone lying in the road having been hit by a car."

In the last three years there have been 2 other petitions for a crossing – but with no effect. Brian himself has now had 3 meetings with Reading MP Tony Durant about the road.

Only in June next year, when

Reading Borough Council's Transportation Committee meets, will Brian know if his efforts have been successful.

But William Sharp, the Council's Traffic Engineer says the Department of Transport's criteria for placing a crossing, judged by pedestrian flow compared with vehicle flow, are far from being met at this spot.

"We are examining this case very carefully because there are definitely special considerations," he says. "But it has to be weighed against many other sites where the criteria are much higher."

The traffic management group is looking into the possibility of traffic islands to ease crossing, at least as a temporary measure.

## Disabled Newcastle councillor will fight government cuts



A 27-year-old woman with cerebral palsy won a seat in Newcastle City Council with a 57 per cent majority at a by-election on 26 September.

Caron Walker, a welfare rights worker at the Disablement Advice Service in South Shields, has been active in the Labour party for 7 years.

"I know I was selected as the Labour Party candidate on the basis that I would fight cuts, and not because I was in a wheel-

chair," she says. "I would find it patronising and degrading to have it otherwise."

"In Newcastle, as in most other areas, the Labour Council is being forced to carry out cuts in services and jobs and I feel that people are needed on the Council who are prepared to fight the Government attempts to cut council spending."

She will campaign for people with disabilities, she says, in the same way as she will campaign for the young and unemployed.

"The Council Chamber was gutted by fire last year and it has only recently been re-opened. They rebuilt the steps between each row of seats, thus presuming that wheelchair access is unnecessary," says Caron.

"But any alterations I want in the Civic Centre are being done – in fact, they started on them just 4 days after I'd been elected."

## Disability Now

Published by The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Tel: 01-636 5020.

Editor Mary Wilkinson  
Assistant Simon Crompton  
Secretary Kathy Johnson  
Circulation Gayle Mooney  
Advertising Don E. Neal, Kingslea Press Ltd., Central Buildings, 24 Southwark Street, London SE1 1TY. Tel: 01-403 3115.

Typesetting by Foremost Typesetting Ltd., 56 Carter Lane, London EC4.

Printed by NewsWeb Ltd., Hastings (0424 52811) and 108 Temple Chambers, Temple Avenue, London EC4. Tel: 01-583 3190.

The views expressed in *Disability Now* are not necessarily those of The Spastics Society.  
Copyright © 1985 The Spastics Society.



EQUIPMENT FOR THE HANDICAPPED



A wide variety of special furniture and equipment for the handicapped child  
Fully illustrated CATALOGUE available free  
Robertsbridge E Sussex TN32 5DR phone 0580 880626